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BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

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ESCAPED!

ADVENTURES IN GERMAN CAPTIVITY.

BY WALLACE ELLISON.

V.

ALTHOUGH I stuck to my principle of doing the unexpected, I finally came to the decision to abandon my scheme of escaping along the lines of the three futile attempts described. A most interesting plan was suggested to me by one of my friends, and I took up the idea with enthusiasm.

On Friday, the twelfth of October 1917, I decided that I would escape the following morning, between half-past eight and nine. Most of my preparations were made, and, during the afternoon, I saw to other details which required attention. About six o'clock on Friday evening everything was ready for my escape. The same evening, at eight o'clock, I received, from a reliable quarter, the appalling news that certain plans on which I had been patiently and cautiously working for about eighteen months had gone smash. There was scarcely a vestige of them left, and I was at a loss to know what to do. Should I abandon all intention to escape, or should I, at almost the fifty-ninth minute of the eleventh hour, endeavour to improvise fresh plans and go notwithstanding?

I confided in a trustworthy friend, who was as much concerned as I was at the news I gave him. I was weary of waiting, and finally decided that I would stick to my resolve to escape the following morning, and trust to my wits and good fortune. I confess it was rather a mad thing to do, pitted as one is, in escap-

ing from Germany, against a ruthlessly efficient organisation and a disconcertingly intelligent people; but, as will be seen, although I found myself committed to a whirl of queer and bewildering adventure, luck was with me, and I won through.

I set out, however, with a mind by no means free from concern regarding the ultimate issue of events. But, apart from my determination to adhere to my motto of doing the unexpected, I quite realised that another long term of imprisonment, which would undoubtedly be the penalty I should have to face in the event of failure, would break me mentally and physically, and I therefore determined on this occasion that I would avail myself of every means which circumstances placed in my power. Had I known beforehand how trying my adventures would be, I think I should have hesitated before embarking upon them.

I must refrain, until the war is over, from describing in full detail how I managed to escape from the Camp. It is quite probable that the German authorities know, but I prefer to assume that I am leaving them in ignorance of the actual facts until I can relate all, without running even a remote risk of implicating others.

As I have said, I had determined to play a lone hand, and, added to the knowledge that the odds were heavily against me in any case, there was this additional disquieting circumstance—that an English accent in my pronunciation of German might spell failure at any stage of my enterprise.

I was present at roll-call, on the race-course, at half-past seven in the morning, and, after breakfast, said "So long!" to the friend in whom I had confided, and, with an attempt at a cheery smile, left him. He was one of the two who had helped me on my last three futile attempts, and when I parted from him, I said—

"I won't say good-bye, because it will look d——d silly if the scheme doesn't work after all."

At half-past nine, I found myself at a point facing the Camp (and outside its confines) on the railway-line which runs from Berlin, through Spandau, to Hanover and Holland. I had got rid of a certain disguise in a certain manner, and was dressed in town clothes, which were more or less German in cut.

I must here explain that a straight road, very little frequented by any one except the German Camp officers and guards, runs past the front of the Camp in the direction of Spandau. Opposite the Camp is a series of allotment gardens, a little wider than the road. These allotments are separated from the railway by a wire fence, and alongside the wire fence runs a rough path, which is not supposed to be used except by employés of the state railway. Briefly put, facing the Camp in three parallel lines are a road, the gardens, and the railway-lines. Once on the side of the railway, my cue was to stroll past

the sentries in broad daylight, by imitating, as well as I could, the whole bearing and ways of a Prussian railway official of the higher order—a sort of railway surveyor, who would have the right to walk along the edge of the railway-line unchallenged by any one. I felt that a Prussian official of this type would, by nature and upbringing, be haughty and supercilious in his bearing. Glancing round in the direction of Spandau, I noticed a working-gang of British seafaring men from the Camp, at work unloading parcels on a railway siding about twenty or thirty paces from me. They were accompanied by an armed guard, but I based my hopes that I should escape his attention upon the fact that I was doing something entirely unexpected. It occurred to me that it would be well to practise on my fellow-countrymen, and I eyed these "damned Englishmen" in as haughty and supercilious a manner as I could. Then, turning on my heel, and facing Berlin, I lit a cigarette and strolled away from them along the railway-line. I saw that I had five sentries to pass, who were separated from me only by the width of the vegetable gardens which lay between me and the road. Three of them were on point-duty to prevent escapes, and two others emerged with two working-gangs from the main gates, just as I set out on my trying stroll. Each of the five, I believe without exception, saw me, and one or two of them stood still and stared intently at me. When I saw a sentry opposite me, staring more than was consistent with good manners, I stood before him, eyed him brazenly up and down, while I smoked my cigarette, and varied my tactics by sometimes carefully examining a damaged part of the barbed-wire fence (as though I felt annoyed that the Prussian Railway Administration had had to suffer so much damage at the hands of careless people), stared up at the signal-box—an additional danger—or examined with absorbed interest a set of disused buffers on the side of the line. In this way I got past four sentries. In order to get past the fifth, who stood at the "Tea House" end of the Camp, it was necessary to get through a wire fence on to the road, pass through a railway arch, and walk away from him for a distance of a hundred yards, before I was lost to view. The man was evidently suspicious of me, for as soon as I arrived at the fence which separated me from the road, I found that he had moved into the middle of the road, and was standing watching me intently, at a distance of less than twenty paces from me, his loaded rifle slung over his shoulder. He seemed to be debating in his mind whether he should challenge me or not, and I was wondering what sort of "dressing down" I ought to give him in the event of his challenging me, in order to leave him with the impression that I was a *pukka*

railway surveyor who objected very strongly to being hindered in the carrying out of his duties. I decided, first of all, to stare him out of countenance, which was rather an ordeal; but fortunately his eyes dropped before mine, and, clumsily lifting the strands of wire, I got through the fence pretty much in the way in which I thought a German railway surveyor would. I then turned my back on him, adjusted my coat-collar, lit another cigarette, and, careful not to appear to be hurrying, walked through the railway arch, along the road which ran, at right angles, into the *Spandauer Chaussee*. After I had gone about a hundred yards I turned to the left, and was immediately out of sight of him. I began to feel rather pleased with my motto.

There was no tram-car in sight, and I set off in the direction of Berlin, walking as fast as my feet could carry me, in order to put as much distance as possible between the hated Camp and myself.

The road was lined with trees, and seeing an officer approaching on the left-hand side, I crossed over to the right-hand side before he saw me, and, taking advantage of a slight wind that was blowing, I put up my left hand, ostensibly for the purpose of holding on my hat, but actually for the purpose of concealing my face from him. When he came level with me, I recognised in him the Camp censor. He passed, and I hurried on. A tram-car was approaching me, going from Berlin to Spandau, and I crossed to the other side of the road. I thought that in it I recognised two of the Camp officers. Again, when I saw the tram approaching, I crossed over to the other side of the road.

When I had walked about half an hour, I saw that a tram-car was overtaking me, and I waited for it at a stopping-place. I jumped on, and fortunately remained standing—as one is allowed to do on German trams—on the conductor's platform. I say "fortunately," for I had not been more than a few seconds on the platform when I noticed, half-way inside, sitting facing me, an Englishman from the Camp named Jones, who was reading the 'Berliner Tageblatt.' I knew that Jones had the privilege of going into Berlin on stated days for the purpose of making purchases for the Camp canteen, and my first impulse was to go up to him and quietly have a good laugh over the manner in which I had got past the Camp guards. Then I thought—

"No; he is certain to be accompanied by a sentry from the Camp."

Jones had not seen me, and, glancing round the wooden framework of the door, I saw, sitting opposite to him on the other side of the gangway, one of the German soldiers who belonged to the Camp, in helmet and full uniform. My one then became to remain unseen if possible, and as Jones was so engrossed in his 'Berliner Tageblatt,' I was able, with the help

of the wooden framework of the door, to stand in such a position that he would not see me. I remembered that I was smoking an English cigarette, and glanced round to see if any one had noticed its peculiar aroma, which is so different from that of German cigarettes. I was relieved to find that it had apparently attracted no attention, and I flung the cigarette into the street.

It became necessary to do a little careful calculation. I assumed that Jones and the soldier would take the tram to a certain tube station, the *Wilhelms Platz*. I also wanted to take a tube from the *Wilhelms Platz* into the centre of the city, but I had already had more of their company than I thought was wise, and decided so to arrange matters that I should be certain of taking the train after theirs. I inquired of the conductress concerning the whereabouts of the *Wilhelms Platz*, which I had never visited before, and dropped from the tram about three hundred yards away from it.

In order to kill time and give the two an opportunity of leaving the tube station before me, I went into a shop to buy cigarettes. The woman seemed to stare at me rather suspiciously, but she allowed me to go, and I took no further notice of the incident. I then strolled in a leisurely fashion to the tube station, took my ticket, and found the train waiting. I walked quite unsuspectingly to the smoking compartment, and just as I was about to enter, found myself again running into Jones and the soldier. Turning back just in time, I entered another compartment.

When, the night before my escape from the Camp, I found that all my carefully laid plans had gone smash, it was a crushing blow to have to face. I felt like a general who had dreamed for months of a brilliant victory, drilled his armies to the highest pitch of perfection, and, just as he imagined himself on the very eve of the realisation of his ambitions, found his armies surrounded and decimated before he had had an opportunity of striking a blow. The friend in whom I had confided, however, introduced me to another man in Camp who was able to give me an address at which I might stay in Berlin. This address, he assured me, was absolutely safe, and I should be able to stay there as long as I liked. But if I find myself mixed up in the next Armageddon in a similar manner, I shall at least know how *not* to act upon the well-meant advice of a friend. It was on the strength of his recommendation that I decided to adhere to my resolve to escape from Camp on the Saturday morning, and when I took the tube from the *Wilhelms Platz* to a certain other part of Berlin, I did so with a view to calling at this address, and remaining there in concealment until I had sufficient time to improvise fresh plans.

I had no great difficulty in finding the house in question when I left the tube station,

but I came out of it ten minutes later in a state of the most abject despair. I had not reached the corner of the street, however, before I found myself humming, half consciously and half unconsciously, "Pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag, and smile, smile, smile!" I had heard this delightful song sung in a Ruhleben Camp *revue* two nights before my escape, and throughout the four weeks and three days which I spent at large in Germany, I found myself involuntarily whistling it in all sorts of queer places. My troubles were plentiful, and I doubt very much whether an old kit-bag would have held them. Still, the song cheered me tremendously.

The address which my well-meaning friend had given me was perfectly useless, and I was fortunate in getting out of the house without meeting the police. I found myself, within an hour of my escape from Camp, without any prospect whatsoever of a roof to my head for that night or any of the succeeding nights which I was bound to spend in Germany before I succeeded in crossing the frontier into Holland. As I walked along the street I pulled myself together, realising the immense importance of appearing in the eyes of passers-by as little like an escaped prisoner as possible. I then reasoned out matters in this wise:—

"It is now eleven o'clock in the morning. At half-past one, at the latest, my escape from Camp will have been discovered. It may have been discovered already, and my pursuers may be hot on the scent at this very moment. I will set to work, however, on the assumption that my escape has not been noticed, and that it will not be discovered until half-past one. That leaves me with a narrow margin of time. I will make immediate use of this opportunity to call at a certain place in another part of the city, where I expect the Berlin police will be looking for me at two o'clock in the afternoon at the latest. When there, I shall be able to learn in a few moments whether the news that I received last night is correct or not. When I know definitely that not a vestige of my plans is left, I shall be able to cut myself adrift from the past, and start with a clear mind on plans for the immediate future. If things are not as bad as I have assumed, all the better, and I will make the fullest possible use of those vestiges of my plans which remain intact."

There was not much time to be lost; so I darted into a tube station, took a ticket for another part of Berlin, and was soon well on my way. I got to the place I sought—partly by tube, partly by cab, and finally on foot, leaving the cab in a crowded street about three hundred yards from the place at which I intended to call. On arrival there, I gave the person whom I sought to understand that I was out from the Camp on leave, and, by careful questioning, elicited information

which confirmed my worst fears.

I felt very despondent. Luck seemed to be dead against me, and I began to debate in my own mind whether it were wiser to go ahead and trust to my wits and good fortune, with the odds so heavily against me, or return to the Camp and accept my punishment, before I became too deeply implicated in a score of unforeseen troubles which, on recapture, would only result in making my punishment all the more harsh.

There are moments when one is led to question whether it is advisable, after all, to undertake an escape alone. One feels an almost overwhelming longing for companionship—not necessarily for some one to talk, or to talk to, but for one who is *there*, sharing the same troubles and cherishing the same hopes. A lone hand, however, is, I am inclined to think, the best of all. The strain is heavier, and seldom relaxes until one has reached the goal; but it has this overwhelming advantage — that the lone man plays his own game, needs to consult no one, and, when he finds himself in a tight corner, can come to decisions rapidly and act upon them at once. In an emergency there is no time for debate. The course of action decided upon may be right or wrong, but it *must* be immediate. There is no time for a consideration of conflicting views, for balancing *pros* and *cons*—the *cons* usually have it! The lone man is "Generalissimo."

While I was in this place talking to this person, and wondering what on earth I could do next, a man came into another room and stared hard at me through the open door. The person to whom I was speaking went to him, and the two talked in undertones for some time. More than once I have had occasion to be grateful, in escaping, for conclusions at which I have arrived — not by any process of reasoning, but by instinct; and on this occasion the conviction flashed through my mind that the man who had entered the other room and had stared at me so intently was a detective. I felt that the game was up. I suspected every one. As they talked in low voices, I strained my ears to the utmost to catch what they were saying, but I could not understand a single word. This strengthened my suspicions. Presently the person came back to me, asked me to sit down, and then returned to the man who had entered and continued the conversation in undertones. Again I could understand nothing. After staring at me again, the visitor left the place, as I thought, to wait for me in the street.

"Who was that man?" I asked, as nonchalantly as I could.

"Oh, only a detective."

I forced a smile as I said—

"Whom is he seeking? Not me, surely?"

"Oh, no! of course not you."

And then the person told me the purpose of the detective's visit.

It was clear that I had had a very narrow escape, as this was one of the very places in which I expected the detectives to seek me, less than two hours later.

"You have not escaped, have you?"

Again I forced a laugh as I said—

"No, indeed not. I am out on leave, as I said before."

Then, glancing at my watch, I pretended to be horrified at the time.

"Good heavens! I must be going. I have squared my soldier to wait for me at such and such a place, and I shall be late if I do not leave immediately. Good-bye."

I went out, wondering what on earth I should say by way of a last attempt at bluff if I met the detective at the door.

On arrival in the street, I found that he was not there; but the street was fairly crowded, and I thought it best to assume that he was somewhere among the people waiting to watch my movements.

"All right," I said to myself; "I will see, at any rate, that I get a run for my money, and give you one as well."

All thoughts of returning to the Camp had vanished of their own accord. Fortune was harrying me at every turn, and my blood was up.

I turned down the first quiet street which I could find, and, choosing only those streets which were little frequented by people, I zigzagged until I had quite lost my bearings. As I turned round one corner, I glanced back along the quiet street, through which I had just passed, in order to make sure that no one answering the description of the detective had followed me. This was an easy matter, seeing that I always chose streets which were not crowded with people. When I felt fairly certain that I had thrown him off the scent, if he were actually following me, I decided to make matters doubly certain by dropping down into a tube station and taking train to another part of the city. I asked my way to a certain tube station of an old man whom I met, and discovered that I had completely lost my bearings. In order to get to this tube station, I had to go along the whole length of the prison in which I had been incarcerated for over two years, and also along the whole length of the Chief Police Station in Berlin. Luckily, I saw no warders, and arrived at the tube station in safety. There, without loss of time, I took a train to the West End of Berlin, and got out at the Zoological Gardens Station.

I was still at large, but the precious freedom for which I had struggled so long and so persistently seemed no nearer than before.

By this time I was hungry, and went into the *Wilhelms Hallen Restaurant*, which I had visited on a former escape, having previously purchased a smart imitation-leather attaché-case, into which I transferred the odd articles I had brought with me from the Camp, and with which my pockets were overloaded. Throughout the remainder of my stay in Berlin, I carried this attaché-case wherever I went, walking about with the air of a twenty-fifth rate commercial traveller. A major, resplendent in his parade uniform, sat at the next table to me, but I took no notice of him, and ordered an expensive vegetable meal which quite failed to satisfy my hunger, but served, nevertheless, to stave off its more acute pangs. Afterwards I visited a number of cafés, and walked along the *Kurfürstendamm* and the *Tauentzienstrasse* — the Pall Mall and Regent Street of Berlin—and did my utmost to ascertain the whereabouts of a certain address which had been given to me by a Russian Pole in prison. Two addresses which I had obtained in this way I had written down on cigarette papers and concealed on my person, with a view to using them in some such emergency. It appeared, however, that this particular address was in one of the most unsavoury slums in Berlin. All the cab-drivers whom I approached refused point-blank to drive me there, mainly, I suppose, on account of the distance. I spoke to one jehu, and asked him to drive me there. He looked me up and down, and then, jerking his thumb over his shoulder at his horse, which was simply a bag of skin and bones, said in his funny Berlin dialect—

"*Wot, mit diesem Hund? Det glaub' ich nit.*" (What! with this tyke? Not likely!)

There was a great shortage of fodder, and I do not remember to have seen one decently fed horse, either in Berlin or in any of the other German towns through which I passed.

The contrast between London and Berlin in time of war is most marked. While there are few indications in London, at the present day, that England is involved in war, apart from the presence of an unusual number of men in khaki and an all-round rise in prices, in Berlin it is impossible to escape from the atmosphere of war. There is much less traffic in the streets than in times of peace. Apart from army automobiles, practically no motor-cars are to be seen in the streets, and the very few which one meets are, on account of the shortage of rubber, furnished with noisy wooden tyres, which are fitted with steel cushion springs between the outer and the inner rim. No bicycles may be used except for business purposes, and the few that are allowed have a type of tyre similar to the one described. By paying through the nose, and producing the necessary coupons, it is still possible to obtain a meal in hotels and

restaurants; but I usually found that I had to have a meal in each of at least two restaurants to satisfy my hunger. The low-class night cafés which used to be characteristic of a certain seamy side of Berlin life are still to be found, but the better-class cafés, such as the Palais de Danse, Maxim's, and the Fledermaus, have been closed by the police.

There is a marked absence in the streets of able-bodied men of miltary age in civilian clothes, and many of the women and children look pinched and hungry. I noticed the effects of the shortage of food more particularly in the case of little children. Tea, cocoa, coffee, and chocolate were unprocurable. The coffee supplied in the most sumptuous Berlin cafés is a concoction brewed from roasted acorns, barley in the husk, or corn, and it is supplied without sugar or saccharine. The hand of war lies heavy on the German people, and wherever I went I heard no sentiments so frequently uttered or so strongly expressed as an utter loathing of war and a fervent desire for peace.

About three o'clock in the afternoon, after many futile attempts to find the address given to me by the Russian Pole, I began to think again that there was something wrong with my luck, and I rashly resolved to put matters immediately to the test. I walked along the *Kurfürstendamm* in search of the most sumptuous café there. I found one without a name, and entered, to find that it had been called, in times of peace, "*Das englische Café.*" I sat down in an easy-chair, lit my last English "Waverley" cigarette, and decided that I would startle the waiter. He came up.

"What will you take, sir?"

"*Bringen Sie mir bitte ein* Whisky and Soda."

He stared at me, with a puzzled expression on his face, and said quietly—

"We haven't got that, sir."

"Haven't you?"

"No, sir."

I then decided that I would ask for something French, and told him to bring me a Hennessy's cognac.

"I think we have a little of that, sir," he replied, and presently brought me a small glass of Three Star brandy, and left me. I sat there for three-quarters of an hour, sipping my brandy and smoking my English cigarette to the end. Neither the aroma of the English cigarette nor the strange thing I had ordered seemed to arouse the waiter's suspicions. When I left the café I felt justified in coming to the conclusion that luck was with me after all—that my star was not as malignant a one as I had feared it must be.

I then set about with more determination than I had previously shown, to find the address which I sought, and, with the help of a chauffeur, who gave me partial instructions, I managed to find the place in the slums of *Alt Moabit*, after a wearisome journey by tram and on foot. I was

not altogether sorry when I found the door of the house banged in my face and locked, before I had had an opportunity of explaining the purpose of my visit. I left to wander a little longer in the streets of that part of Berlin, in the dark and rain, and then, with the future as black before me as ever, I took a tram to the *Potsdamer Platz* in the centre of the city. It was a Saturday night, and there was a great crowd of people.

I needed an opportunity to collect my thoughts, and to decide definitely upon some course of action before it was too late. It was quite out of the question for me to go to a hotel, for I was not furnished with papers, nor had I any luggage, and I had not sufficient confidence in the quality of my German to risk long conversations with any one—at any rate, not until I had become a little more experienced in the art. It occurred to me to visit a café and cinema theatre. In the café I sat among German soldiers and officers for about an hour, examining time-tables, and wondering whether I ought to endeavour to escape from Berlin before midnight. It was essential, however, before I did so, that I should have a more or less clear idea of the lines on which I intended to carry my escape through, and this was not a problem which could be settled in a few minutes. Thinking that I might have the best opportunity of collecting my thoughts in a cinema theatre, where the darkness, to a certain extent, would shield me from too critical observation, I went to the best cinema theatre I could find, and took one of the best seats. I had not been there three minutes before I discovered that the film on the screen was a detective film, in which the particular Sherlock Holmes in question was getting the best of it all the time! Now, I had had enough of detectives for one day; they were beginning to get on my nerves, and, leaving the film-star to track down his luckless victim, I got up and walked out of the theatre into the drizzling rain.

People who knew Berlin well had warned me to steer clear of the *Unter den Linden, Friedrichstrasse, Leipzigerstrasse*, the *Potsdamer Platz, Tauentzienstrasse*, and the *Kurfürstendamm;* but, by some strange cussedness, I found myself, during the three days I spent in Berlin, wandering most of the time along those very streets. If I took a quiet side street in order to get out of one of them, the quiet side street invariably led me into another of the main streets.

By this time I had come to my last card. It was one which I wished to avoid playing if I could possibly do so, but everything else had failed me. It was impossible for me to sleep out. Not only was the weather cold and wet, but there was the more important consideration that I had by this time decided, that I would not endeavour, as one usually does on such an enterprise, to

keep out of sight as much as possible. I would try and disarm suspicion by deliberately placing myself in the way of people, and would try and do everything which the average German, on whom no suspicion rested, might be expected to do. This meant that I could not go about like a vagabond. A clean collar, clean shirt, a shave, and, at any rate, the remains of a crease in my trousers, were quite as essential as cool nerves, and it was therefore necessary that I should find some place in which I could spend the remaining nights of my stay in Berlin with a certain amount of safety. I therefore set out in search of my last address, which was a brothel in one of the lower parts of Berlin. This address, too, I had obtained during my long sojourn in prison, and had treasured it up in my memory for some such emergency. It took me fully an hour to find the exact neighbourhood in which the place was supposed to be situated, but when I came to make close inquiries, I discovered that the number given me did not exist, and I did not dare to make chance inquiries at what might turn out to be quite respectable houses. In my despair, I saw the gaily-lighted windows of a low-class café on the opposite side of the road, and, without a moment's hesitation, walked across and entered.

It was a fairly large café, chiefly frequented by unfortunates, dissipated-looking men, and a few soldiers. I took a seat at a table near the door. Near me, at the next table, was a girl of about twenty to twenty-two years of age, whose smile drew my attention. This caused me to regard her with more care. I was feeling lonely, and it seemed years since I had had a smile from any one. Her features had nothing that was vicious in them. She was rather a pretty girl, with big, blue, melancholy eyes, and, among the loose women who were there, seemed to me to be quite a thing apart. At my invitation, she came to my table and drank coffee with me. We talked, and I had not spoken many sentences before she said to me—

"You are a foreigner, are you not?"

I smiled and said—

"No, I am a German, but prior to the outbreak of war I spent many years in America, hence the foreign accent which is noticeable when I speak German. I came over from America shortly before the outbreak of war, volunteered for the army when war was declared, but was rejected as being physically unfit for military service.

"Oh! that is it," she said. "I thought you spoke with a foreign accent."

Whilst we were talking, I noticed a noisy group of soldiers on a raised dais to my right, all of whom were more or less tipsy. They were drinking *Sekt* (German champagne), and one of them, more tipsy than the rest, was smashing champagne-glasses by flinging them on to the floor as fast as the waiter brought fresh ones. He

then began to stroll about the café, and, feeling that a row was approaching, I thought it wise to disappear before I became involved in it.

I paid the waiter, and my new-found friend and I went out into the dark streets.

Few things in literature have impressed me so much and affected me so deeply as De Quincey's story of Ann and Oxford Street—stony-hearted stepmother—in his 'Confessions of an Opium-Eater.' My situation that night was perhaps more desperate than that of De Quincey when he tramped Oxford Street, friendless and penniless, and met that angelic street-girl, who tended him like a mother and loved him like a sister. But I was older than De Quincey, and the troubles which threatened to overwhelm me had come of my deliberate seeking, so that the advantages from that point of view, at any rate, were heavier on my side. Like De Quincey, I never learned more of my benefactress than her Christian name, and, like De Quincey, however assiduously I may search for her as a free man, to tell her of my gratitude for all that she did for me, I may search and search and never find her. I shall refer to her from this point on as "Ann."

Within a quarter of an hour of first meeting her, when we were away from the café and alone together, I looked at her carefully, and came to the decision that I would confide in her.

"If Ann is to deserve my confidence," I said to myself, "then she deserves my whole confidence, and I will tell her everything about myself, leaving her with the option of informing the police, or helping me in the one or two directions where assistance has become absolutely essential."

"*Fräulein*," I said, "when I told you in the café that I was a German and not a foreigner, I told you a lie."

Her eyes lit up with interest, and I went on—

"I was unable to tell you anything else there, but I am a foreigner. I am an Englishman. I escaped from Ruhleben Camp near Spandau this morning, and escaped with the intention of crossing over into Holland."

While I watched her carefully, the conviction seized me that I had taken the right course, and that my confidence was not misplaced. I never, from that moment on, regretted having told her, and I never once had occasion to falter in the confidence which I placed in her. Never again in my life will I allow to pass unchallenged and unrebuked any sweeping condemnation of the women of her class. Magdalen she may have been, but, for me, she broke her alabaster box of ointment, and discovered depths of tenderness and unselfishness which then and since touched me more deeply than it is in my power to describe. In my memory Ann ranks among the good women of the world.

Through Ann, I managed to obtain an introduction to a gentleman who was a burglar, and something worse. I met

him on the Sunday night in a certain café in a low quarter of the town. Before we met him, Ann said to me—

"I hope you won't mind my having told him that you are a burglar friend of mine?"

I laughed.

"Not a bit. I shouldn't mind in the least, Ann, if you had told him that I was a murderer."

We found the gentleman sitting at a table alone, and I introduced myself to him by clicking my heels together, bowing, and murmuring the name which I had chosen as the most convenient to pronounce.

We were both a little embarrassed at first, but after I had persuaded him that I was one of the same kidney, he warmed up to me.

"Look here, Herr ——," I said, "I have committed a certain crime, but"—here I feigned embarrassment and winked—"if you don't mind, I would rather not go into details."

"Oh, that doesn't matter. One is always willing to help a pal. One never knows when he may need it himself."

"That's very fine on your part," I said. "Now, look here! the police are hot on my heels, and I must get clear of Berlin as soon as possible. I want to go to a certain town"—I gave the name of another town, of course,—"and, in order to be able to get past any of the detectives who may question me in the train, it is absolutely essential that I should have suitable legitimation papers, and those that I have at present are, of course, quite unsuitable for my purpose."

He nodded.

"What sort of papers have you got? If they are what I am seeking, we might come to some arrangement with each other."

He produced his, and eventually I bought them, giving him my word that I would post them to him, anonymously, within three days, after which time they would be of no further use to me. Except for the fact that they were for a younger man, they were exactly what I was seeking. The burglar had been several times rejected by the Army Medical Board as being unfit for military service, and had therefore every right to wear civilian clothes. We went to another house to complete the deal, and when he had left I set about to learn by heart all details concerning the new personality I had assumed. The burglar had had the bad taste to choose a father whose name was unconscionably difficult to pronounce, and I found that he had also been born in some out-of-the-way place which was equally difficult to pronounce. Before we left the café, my friend, the burglar, looked at me and said—

"You are a Swede, are you not?"

I looked at him in amazement.

"Yes," I said; "but how on earth did you discover that?"

"Oh," he answered, "I could tell at once from your Swedish accent."

"That's wonderful," I said. "You must be gifted in that way."

This rather pleased him, and he answered with becoming modesty—

"Yes, I am rather good at that sort of thing. I can always tell a man's nationality from the way he speaks."

More compliments from me.

Ann grew mischievous, and with a twinkle in her eye, which the burglar happily failed to notice, said to him quite seriously—

"Oh yes. An Englishman, for example, would speak with an entirely different accent, wouldn't he?"

"Oh, quite different," answered the burglar.

When everything had been arranged between us, Ann and the burglar began to discuss a certain criminal of their acquaintance who had formerly been one of their set. They described how this man had murdered his mistress and appeared in their midst the same evening as though nothing had happened. They seemed to be greatly impressed by the murderer's *sangfroid*, and I felt it the proper thing to do to express a sort of horrified admiration of his coolness. I am afraid I gave the burglar the impression that such amazing nonchalance as the murderer revealed would be quite beyond my modest powers.

My funds were running low, and I was therefore compelled to decide to leave Berlin earlier than I should otherwise have done. I left by a very early train from the *Schlesischer Bahnhof* on the Tuesday morning.

Ann used to meet me for meals during the day, and during the three days I remained in Berlin, I wandered about the city, visiting different cafés, picture theatres, restaurants, and hotels, frequently sitting in crowded restaurants among German officers and soldiers, doing my best all the time to look as little like an escaped prisoner as possible. The future was still very uncertain, but my plans were maturing.

All this time, Ann did wonders for me.

"Now look here," she would say, "what art thou going to do about thy next meal? Thou wilt have hunger if thou hast no meat to eat. Here are meat coupons, a potato coupon, and a bread coupon. With these thou canst go to such and such a restaurant and get a fairly good lunch. I will meet thee there. No, no, take them. I don't need them at all."

The day before I left Berlin she said to me—

"I have been trying to get thee emergency bread coupons, but I have been unable to do so. With these coupons, however, thou canst go to such and such a shop and buy a quarter of a loaf. At a certain other shop there is a peculiar kind of sausage for sale, without coupons. It is rather expensive, but thou hadst better buy it than go hungry, for the railway journey is a long one. Make sandwiches for thyself with the bread and sausage,

and take them with thee in thy attaché-case."

When I insisted on her taking some of my money, she looked worried and said—

"No, thou wilt have need of it before thou reachest Holland."

I had decided that I would spend the Monday night in a fifth-rate hotel, close to the *Schlesischer Bahnhof*, and that night Ann came along with me, and waited for me in a café, close by, until I had booked my room. I was rather afraid of complications which might arise through registration, as I did not want to use my new name in Berlin, unless I were compelled to do so. Most of the hotels were full, but eventually I found one where a room was free, and when I told the landlady that I should have to leave in order to catch a very early train, she said, to my great relief—

"Oh, well, if you are only staying those few hours, it is hardly worth while to worry about registration."

"Just as you like," I said nonchalantly. "It's no trouble, of course."

"Oh, I don't think we'll bother."

"Right you are," I said. "Good night."

I rejoined Ann later at the café. We walked about the dark streets for a time among the crowds of soldiers and civilians, and then came the moment of parting. Ann looked sadly at me, as the tram which she was to take came to a stop.

"Good-bye, Ann," I said, with a lump in my throat, and tried to put into words the deep gratitude I felt for all that she had done for me.

"Good-bye," she said quietly. "I hope that all will go well with thee. Do not forget to write to me under the name we have agreed upon when thou arrivest safely at a certain town."

I promised, and kept my word two days later. That is the last that I saw of Ann. As I walked back to the inn, I felt inexpressibly sad and lonely.

I left the inn at an unearthly hour the following morning, after a short but sound sleep, and went across to the station, where I bought my ticket for a certain town in another part of Germany, without difficulty. The waiting-room was literally crammed with soldiers going to and from a certain front. There were hundreds of them in full field kit, lying on benches in the corridors, and on tables, chairs, and the floor in the big waiting-room. I stood at the bar among them, and drank coffee, before I left to pass through the barrier to the train.

For reasons of economy, I had taken a third-class ticket; but I noticed, to my dismay, that the third-class compartments were rapidly filling up with soldiers, and, fearing that they might be too talkative for an English escaped prisoner, I decided that I would change into a second-class compartment. I informed the conductress of the train, but it was too late to go back to the booking-office and change my ticket. She said that that

could be arranged on the way. There were one or two other people in the compartment, but I took no notice of them, and settled down to read a German novel that I had bought, which, curiously enough, had the title, "*Ins neue Land*" (Into the new country!) It was only later in the day that the significance of the title struck me. I had taken a slow train in order to avoid control by detectives, and, owing to an accident on the line, we were delayed so long that I was in the train, without leaving it, for over nineteen hours. Six hours of the journey I spent sitting opposite a German officer, who was apparently returning to the front from leave. For a long time he was the only other occupant of the compartment, and I had to maintain a very surly demeanour, lest he should belong to the very unusual type of German officer who is willing to enter into conversation with a chance travelling companion. When we stopped for a long time between stations, owing to the accident to which I have referred, I frequently leaned out of the window and chatted with the girl conductress, and deplored, along with her, the fact that the delay was very hard on the soldiers in the train who were returning home to spend a short leave with their families.

I got into very great difficulties through losing my railway ticket. My conductresses changed about three times. I was going to a station which we will call Y, and at X, the station before Y, late that night, I was still without my ticket, and left the compartment in order to make inquiries of the conductress as to whether she had obtained a transfer ticket for me or not. To my horror, I discovered that the conductress who had taken my third-class ticket was no longer there, and the one who had taken her place, after a moment's consideration, said—

"Oh, that is very awkward. I know now what has happened. The other girl left at Z and took your ticket along with her. When you get to Y, you had better go to the chief station-master and explain the whole matter to him and see what can be done. It is very awkward indeed."

This quite unexpected turn which events had taken worried me a great deal. I knew that my German would not stand the test of long explanations before so astute a railway official as the chief station-master of Y, and I returned to my compartment with a feeling of certainty that I should never get through.

It may be that at times such as these the mind is stabbed awake, as it were, and one seizes hold of possibilities which, under ordinary circumstances, would not occur to one. A railway guard was standing opposite to my compartment, and, judging from the paraphernalia he was carrying, I came to the conclusion that he was going off duty. He had, too, a devil-may-care air which rather pleased me.

"That is my man," I said to myself.

Calling him to me, I explained the whole situation in my best German, and, slipping a tip into his hand, said—

"There's another for you of the same amount if you can only fix up this matter without loss of time when we arrive at Y."

He winked at me and said—

"I will see to that all right, sir."

I pressed him to tell me how he intended to do it, and emphasised the fact that I had had a long journey, was thoroughly tired, and wanted to get to my hotel.

"Above all," I said, "I want to have no fuss with officials. I am too weary for that."

I promised to look out for him at Y, and, on arrival there, soon found him in the crowd which was leaving the train, and passed through the subway with him. I was still very nervous lest he should drag me before some railway official, but evidently this was not his plan. He went to one booking-office after another, and whenever he saw a man clerk there, he turned away. At the last booking-office he found a girl clerk, who looked very tired, and he said to her with a good deal of bounce and bluster—

"Look here! This gentleman, through no fault of his own, has lost his ticket. He has travelled third-class from such and such a place to Y" (mentioning a place about eight miles away from Y, whereas I had come close upon three hundred and fifty miles and had travelled *second-class*). The man's audacity quite took my breath away. "Give him a third-class ticket from such and such a place to Y."

The girl did so. I paid 8d. instead of about twice as many shillings, gave the guard his promised tip, winked at him, and passed safely through the barrier into the dark street.

. . . . . .

During the next four weeks I wandered about a number of different towns, carefully gleaning as much information as possible concerning conditions along the German-Dutch frontier, with a view to ascertaining the most suitable point at which to cross. This time, I was determined to make no mistakes and to do nothing in haste. Most of my nights I spent in little inns in various places, and lived under the guise of seven different nationalities. If the person to whom I happened to be speaking showed extraordinary powers of discernment and guessed that I was a Dane, a Dutchman, or a Swede, I thought it only polite to admit that I was. In my eagerness to be all things to all men (and women), I find that I was, at different times and on different occasions, an Englishman, a German, a German-American, a Swede, a Dane, a Dutchman, and a Dane from Schleswig-Holstein. When I found myself in conversation with a man or woman for the second or third time, it was often puzzling to remember exactly which nation I *did* belong to. In addition to my many nationalities, I had four different names

during the four weeks and three days which I spent at large in Germany.

I passed through some strange vicissitudes, having beforehand resolved to take on anything that came my way. In one inn I soon saw that the people were very short-handed, and in order to ingratiate myself with them, did all sorts of things from washing-up in the kitchen—a hateful business—to making three barrelfuls of *Sauerkraut*. In another inn where I stayed for a few days the landlord came to me one day and asked me if I would help him to kill a pig.

"It's illegal, you know," he said. "We shall be heavily fined and the carcase will be confiscated if the police hear of it."

"Why, of course I will," I answered.

The pig's doom was sealed. We got up very early one morning, waited until the policeman had passed on his beat, and then went with our murderous tools into the pig-sty behind the inn. I felt like a murderer.

"But the old pig will make a terrible row," I said nervously.

"Oh, nonsense! Wait and see!" replied the landlord, unconsciously plagiarising an eminent English statesman.

I carried a huge frying-pan, my function, like that of the fish in "The Death of Cock Robin," being to catch the blood.

Never again shall I be able to look a pig straight in the face. The heartrending cries of that poor beast we so foully murdered haunt me still. It seemed as though all the police in the neighbourhood would be roused by its screams.

"How undignified!" I thought to myself, "to be caught, escaping from Germany, in the act of killing a pig!"

Like a certain illustrious monarch, the pig was an "unconscionable time a-dying," but she did die, and after we had roped the heavy carcase to a ladder, we carried it away upstairs to an attic. My reward came later in the shape of a number of pork chops, and while I ate them I reflected, to my huge delight, on the envy I should arouse in the heart of the average German if he could but see me eating them.

Once I sat in a café, among a crowd of officers and soldiers, at the same table with a man who insisted on telling me, in much too loud a voice, how he had deserted from the German army.

On another occasion I was talking to a Belgian who worked in some factory in the town.

"What are you doing here, Herr ——?" he asked.

"Oh! I've come from Berlin to look for a job."

"Ah, yes. May I ask what sort of job?"

"Oh, certainly. A clerkship, but I want to get a good berth, and intend to have a good look round before I settle down."

He smoked a few of my cigarettes, and then joined a German soldier at another

table. Without any apparent provocation, the soldier began to curse the English with all the epithets at his command.

"Yes, a vile people! a dirty crowd! And poor Belgium! How sorry I feel for Belgium! And all the fault of the English."

"Yes," said the renegade Belgian, "I can stand a Frenchman, a Russian, or even a German, but—an Englishmen—never!"

He little knew.

I very frequently had to sit tight and listen to similar abuse of my own country. Sometimes it was amusing, but usually it was exasperating in the extreme. Occasionally I heard praise of our institutions and of the full measure of liberty we Englishmen enjoy.

The densest, most appalling ignorance prevailed among the common people concerning the motives which had led us to declare war. Jealousy of Germany and of her success as a commercial nation seemed to be regarded as the main if not the sole motive underlying our action. A sinister though skilful press propaganda had attained the ends at which it had aimed.

Deep down, however, in the hearts of many whom I met lurked a black hatred of militarism in all its forms. One man said to me—

"If only the German workman had a bit of backbone, the Prussian Government would not dare to treat us as they do."

The German-Austrian victories in Italy were in full swing, but they seemed to arouse no enthusiasm. Vague rumours of a separate peace with Russia were greeted with more jubilation, but only as the possible forerunner of a general peace.

Every one I met seemed to be hungry, except those who had *Verbindungen* (connections), and were able to pay high prices for illicitly procured supplies. Potatoes were the staple diet, and even these were sometimes unobtainable in sufficiently large quantities. Fat of any kind was almost unprocurable, and I saw people pay with eagerness fifteen shillings a pound for dripping of inferior quality.

I had an almost unrivalled opportunity of judging, and I was very reluctantly forced to the conclusion that there is very, very slight prospect of internal trouble of such a nature as will seriously impede the Supreme Command in the conduct of the war. After the war — perhaps. During the war—exceedingly improbable. Goaded as the masses are, they have no longer left in their hearts the spirit which makes for a successful revolution. And in these times, when a couple of machine-guns can hold a whole crowd at bay, what use are old men, women, and children? They are all that are left. The rest are in the tight grip of the mailed fist and can do nothing.

Seditious propaganda is an impossibility in the army, and a perilous business at home among the civilian populace. The German people, when I

was at large in the country, *were* hungry; they *were* suffering; and I am disposed to the belief that the effects of the privations endured by the civilian populace will be evident to a marked degree in coming generations. But the people are not dying by hundreds in the streets, and it must be borne in mind that, docile as the German people may be, and blind as they undoubtedly are in their obedience to authority, they are also a people of wonderful mettle, steeled to bear hardships with amazing patience, and still doped with the doctrine that they are fighting in defence of their hearths and homes. We stand to lose, and not to gain, by underestimating the fighting qualities of our opponents, and among these qualities capacity for patient endurance among the civilian populace is an essential which ranks not far below the valour of armies.

We must cram down the throats of the Kaiser and the pompous fools behind him the conviction that their mad ambitions have no prospect of realisation. We must smash the idol which the masses of the German people still regard with awe and adoration.

On several occasions I was sitting in the bar-room of an inn, when a policeman came in with what appeared to be a summons sheet in his hand. Sometimes he stared at me, while he questioned the landlord concerning one or other of his guests, and I used to listen with painful anxiety either for my real name or one of the other three which I had assumed. Usually, however, I strolled out of the room as soon as I could conveniently do so, and, once having closed the door behind me, darted into a lavatory, and locked myself in there for twenty minutes, emerging only when I felt reasonably safe in assuming that the policeman had gone.

Many of the strange experiences through which I passed, I must, of necessity, refrain from narrating. Towards the end of the four weeks, I succeeded in making the acquaintance of exactly the kind of man I had been seeking. I cannot tell more of this man than the bare fact that he had done a certain amount of smuggling across the Dutch frontier into Germany, and professed to know every inch of the land on a certain part of the frontier. Had he known my real nationality, I think there is little doubt that he would have handed me over to the police authorities at once. The story I told him, when we first met, was the following:—

"Yes, I am a Dane, but by an unfortunate accident of birth I was born on the wrong side of the Danish frontier in Schleswig-Holstein, and am thus a German by nationality, and liable to serve in the German army. I have kept out of it so far, but the likelihood is that I shall be roped in very soon, and I am determined not to serve, because at heart I am thoroughly Danish. My idea is—if pos-

sible, with your help—to get over into Holland, and from Holland, some way or other, make my way to Copenhagen. My sweetheart lives there, and my idea is to join her in Copenhagen, and live happily there until the war is over."

He shook his head, and regarded me with a puzzled look.

"Now, look here! You are a German, are you not?"

"Of course I am not," I replied. "That is, not at heart. According to my papers, I am a German—in a way—but as far as my real sentiments and sympathies are concerned, I am a Dane. Besides, you can tell that from my Danish accent."

He seemed to be more convinced by this time that my story was true, and we fell to discussing ways and means.

His plan was to leave the train at a certain station not far from the frontier; but, as I pointed out to him, in order to do this, it was absolutely essential that we should both be provided with faultless papers, owing to the fact that we should be travelling most of the time through the so-called *Sperrgebiet* (forbidden territory), and not only should we have to fear control by detectives on the way, but we should also be subjected to very close scrutiny when we passed through the barrier at the station in question. So much I had learned before I met him, and he bore out, from his own experience, all that I said. I finally succeeded in inducing him to procure certain papers for me, and, in the meantime, I went to a shop and had a dozen photographs taken. When I received the papers, I tore off the photograph of the real owner, and succeeded, tolerably well, in replacing my own, and imitating the military stamp on each of its four corners. They were not the papers actually required for that purpose, but I trusted to a certain something on them to carry me through. I was again acting in strict accordance with my motto, and was doing the unexpected.

The night decided upon for our departure arrived. The strain to which I had been subjected during those four weeks and three days had been unusually heavy, and I was glad that the period of waiting had come to an end, and that I had the prospect of action before me.

We took train together at a certain station at night, and travelled to our objective, not far from the frontier. The train was crowded, but at different stations on the way one person after another left the compartment, until we were finally alone together. The smuggler was a very cool fellow, but perhaps on account of the papers I carried, and the fact that he had not done this particular kind of thing before, he was evidently more than a little nervous. I said to myself—

"By Jove! my friend, you *would* be nervous if you knew whom you had along with you."

He had taught me a certain

volley of abuse which I had to hurl at the soldiers on the station, if they seemed inclined to question the validity of my papers, and wished to arrest me.

"My God and Father," I had to say, with as much bounce, bluster, and indignation as I could muster, "I have travelled at least fifty times along this line with these papers, and never had any trouble, and now you stop me! It is too idiotic for words!"

I kept rehearsing all this in German as the train rolled nearer and nearer the station at which we should have to leave the train, and he was not at all satisfied with my pronunciation.

"It's that confounded Danish accent of yours," he said, in despair.

"Oh, that will be all right," I replied, and I would try again, only to be corrected again and again.

"Good heavens," he said, "I hope the train stops before we enter the station. In that event, we will open the carriage door and make a dash in the dark across the lines into the town."

"I am afraid that is unwise," I said, "because, if the station is near Holland, it is almost certain there will be goods trains there from Holland guarded by soldiers, and if they see any one running across the railway lines, they will be certain to take pot-shots at us. Now, look here! don't worry about me. I will give you half a dozen yards' start at the station. You are certain to be able to get through with your papers, and if I get caught, well, I am caught, and there is an end of it. I will swear that I do not know you from Adam. Whatever happens, I will guarantee that you will not be implicated in any way whatsoever."

This seemed to satisfy him a little, but he was still ill at ease.

"But, what if those papers are found on you?"

"Oh," I replied, "that is easily explained. I will swear that I was sitting in a café in X. I saw a man take out those papers and show them to a friend. I wanted papers myself, and on seeing him slip them into his overcoat pocket, which was hanging close to mine, I found an opportunity of stealing them, tore off the man's photograph, put my own in its place, forged the stamp, and—there you are!"

The scheme seemed to satisfy him, and by the time this had been decided upon the train pulled up at the station. I allowed him to get two or three yards ahead of me among the dozen or so people who were going in the direction of the barrier from the train, and saw him pass safely through. With my heart beating uncomfortably fast, I walked up to the barrier, with my legitimation papers in one hand and my ticket in the other. There were two soldiers, armed with rifles and fixed bayonets, and I had to pass between the two. As I handed my ticket to the girl ticket-collector, one of the soldiers made a grab at

my papers, and scrutinised them very carefully. I seemed to pass through an eternity of torment. Then, thank God! he handed them back to me, and I passed through into the dark street with a lighter heart than I had known for weeks.

There I was met by the smuggler, who took me by the arm, and, pressing it to him, said—

"That was splendidly done. Man, you will get a fine welcome in Holland as a German deserter."

"Really?" I said, "that is fine"; and we passed on through the quiet, almost pitch-dark, streets.

We stopped for a little refreshment at an inn in the town, and then set out in the drizzling rain for the frontier itself. We had about two hours' walking before us, before we came to the actual sentry lines, and I have simply a confused recollection of inky darkness, rustling leaves under foot, rain, patches of forest, field-paths, and open heath. The last stretch was across open country, divided into fields by hedges, ditches, and barbed wire. As we approached one hedge, I whispered to my companion that I heard some one moving on the other side. We flung ourselves flat in the wet grass, and listened. Presently we got up, peered round the hedge, and noticed that the noise we thought was made by a sentry came from a number of cows that were lying in the field. We went on.

It was close upon midnight, on the 13th of November 1917, when we came level with the last line of sentries. They were posted along a canal, which, I believe, although I am not certain, was the actual frontier. As Holland lay before me, and as all that remained to be done depended on my own initiative and resource, there was no point in taking my companion farther. I agreed to crouch in the darkness on the banks of the canal until he had got back into safety, and as soon as I could no longer hear or see him, I dropped into the slime and water, and waded, as cautiously as I could, into the middle. I expected to have to swim, but it only took me up to my armpits. Keeping my eyes fixed on a group of pollard willows on the opposite bank of the canal, I made for them, going as slowly, and making as little noise as possible. When I got to the other bank, I rose out of the canal inch by inch, so that the water dripping from my clothes should not make so loud a noise as would attract the attention of any sentry who might be near me in the darkness. I learned later that many men had been shot, trying to cross not far from there.

Once on the opposite bank, I stood close to this clump of trees until some of the water had dripped from me, and then, feeling as though I were clothed in a suit of lead, ran, as fast as my legs could carry me, across an open field.

Was this Holland? or was I still in Germany? I decided, in any event, to proceed for a time with the utmost caution.

There were no stars by means of which I might have found my right direction, so, flinging myself flat on the wet ground, I took out my compass with a view to striking a direction due north, which would have taken me deeper and deeper into Holland. To my dismay, I found that my compass had become flooded. My intention had been to go through the canal with the compass in my mouth, but I had been too eager to reach the Promised Land, and, in my eagerness, had forgotten this very necessary precaution. In my despair, I talked to it like an animate being. I held it still, I tapped it, I shook it, but in vain. The needle would not move. There were no stars visible. There was no moon. No village lights were there ahead to help me. Already, I was shivering with cold in my soaking clothes. Obviously, the only thing to do was to keep on the move. But where? In which direction? Anywhere. Anywhere. But God forbid that I should walk blindly back into Germany. Anywhere but there.

I began to walk, as I thought, in a direction at right angles to the canal I had crossed. Sometimes I came to an impenetrable hedge, or a patch of bog, or a broad ditch, and, in skirting it, completely lost my sense of direction. Three times I found myself back on the banks of the canal, on the other side of which the German sentries were posted, and realised, as I peered into the water, that I had walked in a rough semi-circle back to the point from which I had started.

Good God! was I after all doomed to failure so near the goal? Were three years of persistent effort to escape about to end in my walking blindly back into Germany, after I had trod the soil of the country which had so long been the object of my yearning?

I was strangely calm. The heaviest strain is felt in waiting to do things, not in doing them.

How long I walked I know not, but I suddenly found myself in front of a farm-house, which loomed up before me out of the almost tangible darkness. At last I had found a habitation. Its architecture seemed at any rate un-German. Would the people turn out to be German or Dutch? I decided to take the risk, and, in the event of finding myself face to face with a German soldier, resolved to fight—or run—as seemed best at the moment.

Bang! Bang! Bang! The noise of my knocking reverberated through the whole house.

At last, I heard heavy footsteps on the brick floor, the key turned in the lock, and a burly farmer greeted me, thank God! in a language I did not understand.

The man was a thousand times too stolid. I wanted to embrace him, shake him, dance round and round on the kitchen floor with him.

I told him in a sort of pidgin-German-English that I was an Englishman who had just escaped from Germany. He

took me inside the house, which I lighted with a flash-lamp that I carried. The living-room was beautifully clean with its red-brick floor, and through an open door I saw a bed covered with a counterpane of many colours, from which a head peeped out, clad in a white nightcap. It was the farmer's wife. They spoke to each other in Dutch, but I could not understand. I took from my wet trousers pocket all the money that I possessed, laid it on the table, and begged him to take me to the nearest village, and hand me over to the police or the military authorities. He seemed reluctant to do so, and offered me the use of his barn for the night; but I was already shivering with cold, and decided that I would not trust any one who lived so near the German frontier. I felt that I should not be safe until I was in the custody either of Dutch soldiers or Dutch policemen. Then the old woman said something to her husband, and, feeling that it had reference to me, I asked him to tell me what she had said. In broken German he replied—

"My wife tells me to show you the path to the nearest village, if you will leave us your flash-lamp."

I pressed him to take it, and, shortly afterwards, we left the farm-house for the path which led to the village. There he bade me good-night. I swung along with a lighter step and a lighter heart than I had known for three and a half years. The cup of my happiness was running over. At last! My only pause was to drop on one knee on the gravel path and whisper three words of gratitude for my deliverance.

In the centre of the village I met two Dutch soldiers, gave myself up to them, and was led by them into some wooden barracks near by. There I spent two nights and two days.

. . . . . .

Liberty is wondrously sweet when one has fought for it. Looking back upon those three years of suffering and hardship from the corner of an English fireside, I feel that I would not have had things otherwise for worlds. Strange is the alchemy of youth which can so quickly transmute pain and hardship into a pleasant memory.

Conclusion.

THE OLD BAGHDAD-KERMANSHAH ROAD.

BY EDMUND CANDLER.

I.

NATURE has provided only one real road into Persia from the west. It has been trodden by soldiers, merchants, and pilgrims for twenty centuries, and no doubt it was a thoroughfare long before the origin of script. In ancient times it was the Babylon-Ecbatana road; it was known to Semiramis; it formed the boundary between Media and Assyria; the armies of Darius, Hytaspes, Cyrus, and Khusru Parvis passed along it in the ebb and flow of conquest; the Mongols invaded the south by it, the Arabs the north; Harun-al-Raschid was familiar with it; from early Muhammadan days it became the great pilgrim route from Persia to the shrines of Kerbela, Najaf, and Kazimain; and soon after the British entered Baghdad a column was sent along it to cut off the Turks who were falling back before the Russians from Hamadan. It is now the line of communications for our troops on the Persian border, and members of the Expeditionary Force will remember it with thankfulness as the one road of escape from the desert to the hills.

One has to cover nearly sixty miles of the blank emptiness which is Mesopotamia before one gets a glimpse of the upland country in the Jebel Hamrin foothills. At Baquba, where one crosses the Diala, there are palm groves of almost Malayan luxuriance; but when one leaves it behind the unrelieved desolation is repeated until one comes to Shahraban, another palm-girt, canalised town. Trees are abandoned here until one reaches Kizil Robat, twenty miles on; but four miles beyond Shahraban, on the banks of the Ruz Canal, one comes to stone. This is at the foot of the Jebel Hamrin under the pass. I had not seen so much as a pebble in Mesopotamia since we landed at Basra nearly eighteen months before. After this stone and wood, without which earth can arrive at very little in the way of feature or architectural design, become more frequent. Stone, even rock, abounds, but a tree is still a rarity.

I doubt if a traveller entering Jebel Hamrin from the north would think these hills beautiful. They are stark and naked, and except for two months in the spring there is nothing virginal about them. Nor are they impressive. In outline they offer that uniform repetition of feature you find in all hot lands, a tired and disciplined symmetry with no

wilfulness in it—so many hooded cowls in a row, so many spines and spurs and re-entrants like diagrams in a school-book, no earth-born castles or rocks

"fantastically set
With cupola or minaret."

Anywhere else Jebel Hamrin might stand for the very prose and geometry of hills. The range is lifted a bare four hundred feet above the plain, and is quite devoid of grandeur or design. But sublimity is relative. To us a corner or screen of rock behind which anything could hide contained a mystery. The broken ground was the old sea margin: it made all the difference. Hitherto we had trodden the alluvial silt where flowers did not grow, or grew unwillingly. Here there were flowers—the homely buttercup, veronica, charlock, cranesbill, pimpernel, clover, vetch, dandelion, and fields of iris and red anemone.

The first action we fought at Jebel Hamrin, in the third week of March 1917, was a sanguinary affair. The Turks held us back on the hills when they were crossing the Diala with the Russians behind them, and, as we imagined, pressing them hard. The Turkish gunners had the range of us, and we learnt the difference between the burst of a shell on hard rock and soft soil. Also the warren of low hillocks was so complicated that one never knew if one were on dead ground or not. In places where one thought one was under cover one drew machine-gun fire, and most of the little passes between one low ridge and another were traps. I remember a patch of open ground between rock which a sniper had marked for his preserve. There was a bush of some blue leguminous plant just where one reached cover the other side, and the impulse to recross was irresistible. The relief to be out of the flat was so great that the actual hills and the birds and the flowers and the gravel and rock interested me more at the time than the business that had brought us there. These were no doubt the preoccupations of a trivial mind, but one consoled oneself with the thought that the covetousness and intrigues, or the honest instinct for survival, which had sent armed bodies of men through these passes for the last two thousand years were merely transient, whereas the hills in their stark nakedness or dainty covering were eternal. I have no doubt there were renegades in the armies of the Chosroes who botanised in a battle. Nobody bothers much now which side did the most killing, but the iris and the mauve hyacinth and the red anemone still blossom under Jebel Hamrin.

A day or two after the battle the Turks effected their crossing of the Diala. They had been too strong for us to dislodge with our two brigades. Then, on April 2, we met the Cossacks at Kizil Robat. A single squadron had ridden in without transport or supplies. It was a hurried meeting, and they left the same night, for

we could neither of us stretch our line of communications far enough to keep up contact. But I was to meet them afterwards at Mendali, and again at Kasri-Shirin. During the summer the force that formed our right flank stayed at Baquba, then in October we advanced again, and there was a second battle of Jebel Hamrin. This was a bloodless affair. The Turks' position lay across the Khanikin road and along the Jebel Hamrin ridge, on both banks of the Diala. Our plan was to round him up by a huge converging movement. While our columns pressed in on his right, left, and centre, our cavalry was to work round from Mendali in the rear of his position, and cut off his retreat along the Khanikin road. All these movements were carried out like clockwork, without a hitch. Every one was in the right place at the right time. Only our net closed on emptiness. The Turk had slipped away in the night and crossed the Diala. The smoke of trains —for by this time the railway had followed us—and the dust of innumerable convoys had warned him. We had put a Nasmyth hammer in motion to crush a grasshopper. That to the civilian mind is exactly how battles ought to be fought. We showed our hand, and the Turk threw down his on the table. He took off his hat to us and departed, leaving us the position. It was a very gentlemanly affair, and nobody was much hurt. I think our casualties on the left bank were six.

These operations took place in the third week of October, and I did not expect to find flowers; but, as if to prove the catholic virtue of the soil, the fields by the Ruz Canal under Table Mountain were covered with autumn crocuses. The Turks had really quitted this time, and we were able to explore the gorge in peace where the Diala forces its passage through the hills. Here it is a river of singular beauty. The blue water flows between cliffs of the steep red rock which gives its name to the range. "Hamrin" in Arabic is the feminine plural of the adjective *ahmar*, red. The rock is red sandstone, and the redness lightens and deepens continually with sun and cloud, from the red of old brick to the pink of the inside of a shell washed up by the tide. In the soft evening light I have seen the whole range as pink as the walls of Jaipur.

Six weeks later we were engaged on Jebel Hamrin again. This time operations were on the right bank of the Diala, and in a three days' battle we cleared the ridge, drove the Turks over the Sakal Tutan pass down into the Qara Tappah plain, and pursued them over the Nahrin river and the undulating spurs beyond until they melted away in the neighbourhood of Kifri on the Mosul road. On the second morning after the night march we looked down over a vast stretch of country from the Sakal Tutan pass. The white wisps of dust in the distance, like the smoke of camp-fires, were the Turks we had dislodged the day before trekking over the plain to take

up their new position in the next range; and the long grey caterpillar on the flank, with its sparkle of a helio like a glistening dewdrop, was one of our columns converging on them from the Diala. This manœuvre battle in the hills was in the old style, and I think nearly every one enjoyed it. I was reminded of Tibet. We covered nearly forty miles of strange country, and never knew where we were going to camp or how far the pursuit was to be pushed; and it was over alternating hill and plain —mostly the kind of high gravelly down on which you would expect to see marmots. This was in November. Six months afterwards, in May 1918, when the grass was deep and the hollyhocks glowed in the corn and the great rhubarb-like glossostemon was a feature in the landscape, I was with the cavalry 120 miles north-west of Jebel Hamrin, in the high plateaux of Southern Kurdestan. We drove the Turks out of Kifri and Kirkup, and pursued them as far as Altun Kupru, on the banks of the Lesser Zab.

It was not until the first week of January 1918 that I had the chance of following the Baghdad-Kermanshah road into Persia, as far as the watershed of the Zagros range, a few miles above Kerind. I went with an escort to bring back the wireless detachment, who had been with the Cossacks the best part of a year in Kermanshah. As we went north we saw whiter sheep and earlier grass. The same rolling gravelly downs extended from Kizil Robat to Khanikin, the Turkish frontier town where the Alwand is crossed by a fine ten-arched bridge. The actual frontier is crossed some nine miles farther on, and one does not come on relics of the hungry generations that tred one another down on the road between Babylon and Ecbatana until one reaches Kasri-Shirin, the first town across the border. It is a picturesque little mountain town and spreads itself out above the Alwand river and under an old stone castle on a hill. The palms of Baquba, Shahraban, Kizil Robat, and Khanikin give place to willows—a sign that one has left the sub-tropical deserts behind. North of the town one passes a wall of cyclopean masonry, twelve feet high where it touches the road, built of hewn stone and mortar or cement. The thought of a castrum as the Roman origin of Kasri leapt to one's mind. But the place is Sassanian. The foundations of the palace, and the fort, and the walls of the park cover many square miles. Within this enclosure were the gardens of Khusru Parvis and Shirin, his beautiful, devout, and accomplished queen, the Christian woman who played polo and founded churches and monasteries; and it is from Khusru and Shirin that the town derives its name. On the other side of the river there is a rainbow formation in the rock, one arc behind another in tiers of three, purple in the centre, white above, and a dark mul-

berry tint beneath. The cliffs beyond were coated with a purplish-red like sea-wrack, and their rocky bases, glistening in the rain, looked as if the ebbing tide had just left them. One might search for the rainbows another day and not find them, for the colours were constantly changing. The red sea-wrack faded to a dull lichen hue as I watched it. In feature and colour it is a rich country for the sun and cloud to play on, and the hillside where the ancient palace stood was a natural throne for the Chosroes.

On the road to Seri Pul we passed four of the round Persian watch-towers, all standing on hills where the road could be best ambushed and enfiladed—at "the place of thieves," or "cut-throat pass," or "the gorge that destroys horses' shoes." They stood out so boldly and in such desolation that one would have pulled out one's "slug-horn," if one had one, and blown lustily at them. The pilgrim traffic had ceased since the beginning of the war. Even in the least pious years 50,000 used to pass along this road to Kerbela, and many corpses for burial in the holy places, and the revenue from the traffic was high both in Kermanshah and Khanikin.

The passage of pilgrims explained the spaciousness of the Khans, or Serais. Coming back in the flood and rain the whole force put up in the two Khans at Seri Pul—the X—shires, the Persian gendarmerie, the machine-gun company, the ambulance, the Sappers and Miners with a few motors and some transport in one Khan, and the mountain battery and cavalry in the other. In the outer alcoves, or cubicles, you found odds and ends like horses, mules, drabies, cooks, Persian gendarmes, Kurdish drivers, staff officers, interpreters; and in the wide inner vaulted corridors, which had stabled the cavalry of Shah Abbas in Queen Elizabeth's days, the whole of the X—shire battalion, the hospital, signallers, sappers, and machine-gun company.

The country was rich enough in peace time to support its own population and the hundred thousand pilgrims who used the road; but when we passed through it was desolate. It was not a case of mere ravage, but of almost complete denudation. Standing crops had been burnt and granaries destroyed, so that there was no seed for the next harvest. Khanikin was half demolished, Kasri-Shirin a waste, and the rich fields of Seri Pul lay fallow; the village and Khan were deserted. Five armies had passed through in eighteen months, Cossack and Turk, living on the country and destroying everything. Trees had been felled, solid roofs broken up, and rafters and doors torn away for firewood. Hearths lay open to the wind and weather. The great gateway of the Khan at Seri Pul had been consumed in campfires. The few inhabitants that had been left in the villages by the roadside were ragged, starved, and miserable, and begged piteously for food.

On the way back two young Kurds, of good physique, but wasted, came to us in the gateway of the Khan at Seri Pul and begged for bread. We gave them each a couple of ration biscuits. The next day we met them on the road. They had gone twenty miles, stumbling through the rain and the dark. One lay dead by the roadside, the other stood over him and called to us as we passed. He begged us to take the corpse in the motor. It was impossible. In peace time, perhaps, two of us might have walked and given our seats to the corpse and its guardian. But in war one does not do these things: the calls for relief are too many. The old standard of charity would immobilise one, though I do not think one is less sensitive to suffering because of one's daily contact with it. When we refused the man offered us a small piece of silver, the value of fourpence. Then he pointed to the sky and wept, and called upon Allah. "Sahib! Sahib! to Kasri-Shirin!" he wailed after us, and the throb of the engine drowned his sobs. I hoped that one of the empty ambulances that were following would take him up, but I felt his reproachful eyes in the small of my back for miles.

In Khanikin the next day I saw an emaciated old woman, all skin and bones, being bled by a leech. She did not look as if she had any blood in her, but a stream poured out of her arm that would have filled a small jug. The leech picked up a lump of the filthy trodden bazaar clay and clapped it on the wound. The woman carefully extracted a small copper piece from a bag and gave it to him. He took it grumblingly, and she tottered away. The bleeding may have been a normal operation in Khanikin, resorted to as in the days of our grandfathers, as a salve to a dozen different kinds of distress; but the shadow of starvation was so palpable everywhere that I was afraid the old lady might have thought she would be less hungry after she had been bled. The same day a driver told me that he and a corporal had been attacked by two Kurds, who were unarmed, and were evidently driven to it by hunger, thinking that they might find food on the motor. Our men hammered them and then fed them. It was a relief to hear that we were sending rice into Khanikin.

We approached Pai Taq, the village at the foot of the pass, in stormy weather. Every one was very much struck with the scenery. Perhaps we exaggerated the grandeur of it. After a year on the Tigris flat one might discover sublimity in a railway embankment. Mist always magnifies things. The dark blanket of cloud hanging over the bluff headlands made them look immense. Then the storm, the rainbow, the intermittent shafts of light irradiating promontories, the red halo thrown on the cliffs at sunset, transfigured everything. There were splashes of autumn colouring on mountain

and plain, the foxy red of the osiers, and the tawny rushes in the Alwand stream under the rock wall, and the russet oak scrub on the hillsides. The pass is approached by a clear-cut outer gate in the immediate foothills. One enters by a broad sweeping avenue of plain between two great walls of rock which close and regally usher you in. The ancient pomp of Persia seemed to have been preserved in these hills. As they entered the pass the home-returning soldiers of Xerxes, Darius, and the Chosroes must have compared the majesty of their own land with the poverty in design of the territories they had been overrunning. Pai Taq and Kasri-Shirin were the thresholds of a kingdom whose people would naturally be conquerors.

Yet the Sassanidae came down to Ctesiphon, a land fertile in crops in those days, but sterile in beauty, and in respect to climate thinly partitioned from hell. For thousands of years the Kings of the earth chose to live in Mesopotamia. I have never understood why Nebuchadnezzar and his like were content with their firepit in Babylon when they might have seated their majesty on a natural throne in the hills. Nebuchadnezzar, speaking in the bricks of a protective wall he built on the Euphrates, says: "I raised its foundations on the depth of the water, its top I exalted like the wooded mountains." He was familiar, it seems, with the existence of hills. He might have lived in Kermanshah and farmed and colonised the plain. Or he might have had a summer palace in the Pusht-i-Kuh, or in Lebanon when it was really a forest and the camel convoys of Babylon carried the sweet-scented timber over the desert of Palmyra to the temple of Marduk at Esagila. But he lived in Babylon because he loved it. He went on repairing and extending the city because it was already immense. "Because my heart did not wish the dwelling-place of my majesty to be in another place, because I did not build a royal dwelling in any other place, and because I did not consign the kingly property to all lands, my dwelling-place in Babylon grew insufficient for the dignity of my majesty;" because he only cared about "amazing the people" and being remembered for ever, and therefore never knew the happiness of the camel-boy who brought the cedar-wood from Lebanon, and who for one month in three breathed mountain air and trod on flowers. And because of the antiquity of his name and its inclusion in holy writ one is apt to forget that Nebuchadnezzar was a sad vulgarian, materialist, and snob, and that it was the most perfect piece of poetic justice in the Bible that he should have been made to eat grass—the grass of Babylon and not of Kermanshah.

The Taq-i-Garra pass (5200 feet) is only steep on the west side. One mounts nearly 1500 feet in two and a half miles, passing the tâq, a massive arch of marble, the wayside resting-place for travellers and pilgrims

which gives the village and the pass their name. The origin of the tâq is clouded in legend, but I like to think that Khusru used to rest there with his Shirin and water his black horse Shabdiz. After the first ascent the gradient is easy for another eleven or twelve miles; then the pass peters out into the high Persian plateau. I was determined to reach the watershed, but as luck would have it we met the wireless detachment in the middle of the pass and the column turned back. Things seemed pretty hopeless, but I managed to wheedle an escort out of the cavalry, a rissaldar and four sowars, and was able to push on. First we met the advance guard of the mounted Persian gendarmerie in their black cloaks, then the detachment and their wireless carts drawn by six stout mules. Their faces were black with wind and weather, and the white butterfly on their slouch hats faded to a lichen grey. At any ordinary time I should have pulled up and asked them how they had spent the winter in Kermanshah; but now I would not have stopped if I had met the holy carpet or Joan of Arc. It was getting late, and it was not much more than an even chance whether I could reach the far end of the pass and get back by night. I met an officer who called back to me that he was the end of the convoy. I explained that I was going to have a look at the pass. He shouted back, "Not worth it. A good six miles. No view. All like this." I thanked him and said I would go on a bit, but my silent comment was: View be d——d. One is not a Yankee collecting God Almighty's coloured posters.

No book or talk, eulogy or detraction, can explain a pass. Every pass has its own peculiar way of taking you through a mountain range, and always something new to show you on the other side. It is the end of a scene, act, or chapter, and it does not matter whether it is bathos or climax or anything between so long as you wring its secret out of it. It clinches one experience and promises another. The physical effort in meeting the challenge and the mental suspense keep pace, and honour and curiosity are satisfied at the same time. The maps that the wanderer carries in his head would have little colour in them if it were not for passes.

We rode on for ages. The narrow valley grew almost flat, but refused to become a watershed, and the stream trickled the wrong way, the way we had come, feeding the Diala, and ultimately the unlovely Tigris. I wanted a stream that fed something else.[1] But

[1] It is not generally realised, and I did not realise it at the time, that the Ab-i-Kerind, the Kara Su, and the streams one crosses for more than a hundred miles beyond the Taq-i-Garra pass ultimately feed the Tigris by the Kharkeh channel, or lose themselves in the marshes about Hawizeh, and that the real watershed, the last barrier to the gulf-seeking streams, lies between Kangavar and Hamadan.

it seemed hopeless. One could not keep those sowars out till long after dark for a mere superstition.

But was it a superstition? I thought of the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin. A balked pass seemed the symbol of feebleness, incompleteness, and indecision. It is as bad to turn from a pass when one has set one's face to it as it is to turn one's back on an unbeaten enemy.

I asked the rissaldar if he had ever been in snow. He told me that he had seen it, but that he had never touched it. One got a glimpse of it, he said, on clear days in the Himalayas from his village near Lala Musa in the Punjab. I told him that in half an hour we should be treading it. It was a happy thought, as it gave us a common objective. Till then I had been depressed by the feeling that I was merely the occasion for a "fatigue." But the rissaldar, like nearly all sepoys, was a responsive fellow, and seemed quite to enter into the spirit of the search for actual snow. We came to some level stretches, not too stony for a canter, and so we put a mile or two behind us; but the stream refused to dwindle, and persisted in flowing the wrong way.

We had nearly reached the hour and the minute which I had fixed as the obligatory limit to our adventure, when a turn gave us a low horizon, which seemed to be literally dropping away. I felt that this was no illusion, and an old blackened guard-house, such as stands at all entrances and exits on these frontiers, doubled my assurance. We galloped over the peaty turf, and saw the stream swinging down on us from a lateral ravine. We reached the wall. In front there was no wild drop falling away. Instead, we stood on the high brown Persian plateau, girt with low mulberry-coloured hills. The Taq-i-Garra leads up to the tableland. The rissaldar remarked it. He said that he had never seen a pass before which was all ascent and no decline. But the snow was there. It had fallen appropriately on the spot. I ate some, gulping down a libation to the mountains and a prayer that I might never spend another summer in the Mesopotamian plain. Then I showed the rissaldar how we made snowballs in England, and he pelted the sowars. They were enjoying it. Before we mounted I saw the youngest of them grinning self-consciously, fill his horse's nose-bag with snow, to carry away as testimony of the adventure to unbelieving bhais. An unsympathetic escort would have spoilt it. As it was, I felt as pleased as if we had won another battle.

We got back soon after dark, and a staff officer asked me if I had had a good view. I told him that there was not much of a view, so I suppose he took it that our labour was wasted. However, he agreed that it must have been homely to be in snow again. The snow in the pass, and the unexpected

brown tableland, and the crisp russet leaves of the oak, were very homely. The dead leaves were clinging to the bough in the same obstinate way they have through the long winter in English lanes and copses; and when you crushed them they emitted the same delicious dank smell. And I was glad to have seen the central tableland. Before that my wanderings had only touched the glacis, as it were, of Persia. I had a picture now of the kind of country that repeats itself in parallel strips of ridge and plain right up to where the northern rampart falls away in forest-clad slopes to the shores of the Caspian. Memories of passes like the Taq-i-Garra, the Khyber, and the Nathu-la, so different in what they divulge, convert the atlas from a mere book of reference to a handbook of romance.

II.

I was offered the chance of returning with the Persian gendarmerie from Kasri-Shirin to Kermanshah, but I decided to wait until the spring, when the hills would be covered with flowers. On April 10 I was in Jebel Hamrin. It was a late summer. The hills were a blaze of colour. The scarlet anemone (*Anemone coronaria*) in the folds of the gravel grew as thick as poppies in the corn, and the fields of wild barley whitened like the under-fur of an animal stroked by the cool hand of the wind. At Pai Taq I explored the gorge under the pass. The Alwand disdains steps or gradients, and makes its descent into the lower valley in two bold leaps. I have never seen anything more sudden or final than the end of the gorge, or more studiedly architectural. One could imagine it built by the master mason of some Achemaean or Sassanian king, a piece of landscape gardening in the paradisus of Artaxerxes.

You stand in an arched chamber and look up through the broken roof to the blue sky and the little fringing trees on the edge of the cliff overhanging the upper bed of the stream. The huge grotto is so walled and roofed that no breeze can enter it from the east or west or north—only the perpetual cool draught of air that is flung outward by the fall. The upper valley is hidden. You can only see the last two leaps of the torrent, first where it plunges from an invisible channel on to a platform of rock worn by the water into a basin, the kind of Triton reservoir into which architects aspire to confine a cascade, before it is released in falls on to the terraced gardens underneath. The water is held here, and collects for its last plunge where it tumbles from the centre of the rim of the basin, a solid column clear of the rock, into the green pool below

The cliffs on both sides are overhanging, and the rock is hollowed away behind the fall so that this almost complete vault is repeated in diminishing tiers like the segments of a spiral. The pool is deep and bow-shaped, and the water gathers again for its quiet discharge by a natural conduit in the centre corresponding to the lip of the basin above. After this it resumes the waywardness of a mountain stream, but its fall is the most ordered and symmetrical I have seen, very beautiful without being wild, and quite Persian in its inspiration. If not the fall of the Alwand, it must have been some such natural cascade that inspired the first Persian landscape gardener with the traditions that one finds expressed in every walled pleasaunce from Azerbaijan to Kashmir. It may have been fancy, but I thought I found a certain formalism in all Persian scenery consistent with one's early conceptions of the country. On every march one is conscious of being in a land which was the nursery of poets, kings, fountains, palaces, and pride, the origin of nearly everything that is decorative in the near and middle East.

There was only wanting some bright formal plant to complete the sense of design appropriate in a garden of the Chosroes. It was too early in the year for the path that led to the grotto to have a border of any kind; but by a strange coincidence I found my first wild tulips (*Tulipa montana*) there. This most formal of flowers is not likely to be a favourite with wanderers who do not know it wild. One thinks of it as rather a bourgeois plant, the habitué of public gardens and florists' windows. One owes it the same kind of debt as one owes a municipality, and remembers that its bulbs are imported by the gross from the Dutch. It is a privileged plant, and one associates it with tailors' bills. But a red, crinkly-leaved, upright tulip in the Zagros is a different thing. At the first sight of it any silly prejudice one may have felt against the family is dissipated for ever, just as a democrat's intolerance of dandies is forgotten when he discovers how well the genus shapes in a campaign.

Oddly enough, the rough formalism which I had discovered or imagined in Persian landscape was repeated in Kerind, the first town beyond the Taq-i-Garra pass. Kerind fills the mouth of the gorge where the Ab-i-Kerind flows out into the plateau. It is built in two perfect lunettes, bisected by the stream and spreading fanwise on each bank. The curtain of splintered rock behind, with ribs as symmetrical as vertebræ, is divided into two sweeping arcs, like the town, which is the same colour as the cliff, with its apex wedged deep in the gorge. Behind this romantic cleft the orchards stretch a mile. The apricots, almonds, apple, cherry, peach, were in blossom. Everything was in the same stage as in an early April season at home. There were banks of violets, grape-hyacinths, celan-

dines, dandelions in flower. The catkins were on the willows. The leaf-buds of the walnuts and of the delicate, upright, white-stemmed poplars that lined the water-cuts had not emerged. Last year's dead leaves and seeds clung to the briar. It was a much more English flora than you will find in southern Europe.

The Serai and the outskirts of the town adjoining the road had been destroyed. The place was in the grip of famine. The streets were strewn with the shells of acorns which the Kerindis were bringing down from the Zagros, and eating raw or grinding into flour. Scattered over the plateau one saw thin black figures gathering herbs or searching the road for grain or oats, collecting single ears dropped from the horses' nose-bags where the cavalry or transport had fed, or dissecting offal for undigested grain. Some of these groups of two or three made me think of the Angelus picture. It was the spiritual antithesis of Millet's vision. The peasants, as they ceased their plucking of herbs to watch us pass, were standing in the same arrested way, only with this difference: it was a reaping of weeds instead of corn; instead of promise, hope, fulfilment, faith, and the confident repose in a loving and watchful God, there was hopelessness, denial, unbelief, no sign or encouragement to believe, only the heedless elements and the slow torpor ending in death.

We had started relief work on the road, and were able to feed a thousand or so, but we could not command corn enough to affect more than the margin of distress, and money was of little use when prices were so high. Nearly every man, woman, and child begged food of us. Their skeleton frames and the dead we passed on the road were more eloquent than their cries of "Where is your charity?" We gave what we could spare, but in most cases we could not give. The eyes of the dying pierced the small of our backs like gimlets as we left them behind; their voices followed us calling out of the abyss. And we passers-by excused our helplessness, saying, "We cannot be their providence." "What is the use of a loaf of bread among so many?" "It is no good feeding this woman or child; it only means they will die the day after to-morrow instead of to-day, a few more hours of wretchedness." Yet inwardly we were feeling that any starving soul we left to die was a personal reproach. The fate of a thousand others did not affect our relations with the particular man. It was a case between us and him—a strong man with food and money, and a weak man with nothing, and the hunger which we could satisfy by giving away part of our possessions, submerging him inch by inch, hour by hour creeping over him as insidiously and irresistibly as the tide. If one put oneself in the starving man's place, one saw the dreadful logic of this. Does one let a man sink within reach of

one's hand because a number of others are drowning? In the agony of every voice and gesture this question was implicit.

Up to Pai Taq conditions were better than they had been in January, owing to the supplies we were able to send along the road, but we were entering a zone which could depend on no relief other than what we could bring it. Some of our troops had orphans with them, whom they had picked up lying beside the bodies of fathers and mothers who had died by the roadside. "John Hampshire," a typical little Kurdish brat, under five, cheery and rotund, with a perpetual smile and a paunch that denied want, used to come into mess after dinner and light our cigarettes, and amuse himself with us in as full a measure as we were amused with him.

After Kerind things became worse, and one could think of nothing else but the general want. Persia had been visited by a drought in 1917. Districts untouched by war were famine-stricken. In Teheran alone, according to the statistics of the local newspapers, 40,000 had died before the end of March. In Hamadan, the Persians told me, they were eating human flesh; only the dogs and nature's other professional scavengers were strong; they and the children fought for carrion by the roadside. In the province of Kermanshah, at ordinary times the richest grain-producing land in Persia, now wasted for three years by Cossack and Turk in alternate advance and retreat, there was little hope that the needier part of the population could hold out until the harvest.

The capital of the province lies some fifty miles by road north-east of Kerind, and one crosses three passes of over 5000 feet on the way—the Nil Sikhan (5350 feet), the Charzowar (5360 feet), and the Ainal Kush (5350 feet). From the Ainal Kush one looks down upon the plain of Kermanshah. The city is spread on two low hills commanding one of the grandest panoramas in Persia. Five miles to the north, across a gently swelling plain, rise the foundations of the Massif that culminates in Perau (10,470 feet) and breaks off abruptly to the east in the sheer rock face of Bisotun. Deep gorges penetrate it, the home of ibex and the country of those unassailable robber tribes the Pairawand and Kuliai. To the west, following a branch of the Kara Su, winds the road to Suleimania and Kurdistan; to the east, under the sculptured bluff of Bisotun, the road to Hamadan and the Caspian, with branches striking off to Ispahan, Tabriz, and Teheran. The great beauty of these mountains of the plateau is that one can comprehend their whole anatomy at a glance. Their approaches are not hidden or confused by lesser hills or broken ground. Perau and Bisotun stand boldly on their foundations, the sweeping plateau is their threshold; their troubled

summits are set off by the repose of the plain. This does not enhance their mystery or wildness; it lends their mountain spirit an added symmetry and grace. It is the formalism of Persian landscape again. The hills owe to the soft lines of the plateau what the diamond owes its foil.

We descended the pass in a break of the storm. Fresh snow lay on the ranges all round, and the vivid green of the crops in the valley of the Kara Su promised a rich harvest. If only the people could hold out another three months there would be no more want. The gardens behind the town winding up the banks of the stream into the hills, in one valley an uninterrupted stretch of four miles, were a shimmer of bloom, pink of apple, and white of cherry, plum, and pear. Orchards and vineyards were mingled and fenced with the pale straight poplar which serves as timber and a screen against the wind. These valleys are what Ruskin would call "the wheat and grape lands": they are perennially watered by springs, and if nature has her own way there need never be drought. The famine of 1917-18 was man's doing, a ripple of the universal death oozing from its fountain of envy and hate and pride in Berlin.

The plague and misery with which the Hun has infected the world is the more manifest the farther one gets from the hub of the evil. One expects the routine of hell at the source of pollution in the Continent that conceived it. It is only when one finds the shadow of the angel of death flung over the mountains and deserts of Asia that one realises how complete is the sway of the devil raised in Potsdam. My first realisation of a famine on a wide scale was in the streets of Kermanshah. I was shocked to see a boy dead in the Bazaar. He was lying by the side of the road, his hands clutched, and some horse grain sticking to his lips as if he had been unable to swallow his last meal. The bazaars were crowded, but no one seemed to take any notice of him. A little farther on I passed another body of a young man, mere blotched skin and bone in loose rags. The crowd stepped to one side indifferently. There were children lying on skins in the mud crying piteously. I was told that it is a common trick of the Persian mendicant to put his children out like this to attract alms, also that they would borrow corpses to lay by their side on the road to excite pity. The professional beggar in Persia has studied the art of moving compassion in times of plenty—he is a realistic actor of a high order—his penetrating and distressing whine cuts like a jagged saw. Now the wolf was really at the door. You could see his ravages in every face. There was no pretence. The large troop of professional beggars was swelled by the whole of the poorer part of the population. Twenty or

thirty died in the streets every day uncared for by their own people, and many lay dead in the houses. There was a public scavenger who collected the bodies in the evening and threw them into the pit outside the city. The law of the jungle held in Kermanshah. When the hunger gripped a family the husband would sometimes turn his wives and children into the street or abandon his home himself. The weakest went to the wall. I was changing some rupee notes at a money-changer's and gave a keran to a starved woman who was standing by. Four other women were on her like vultures, tearing at her hands and dress, howling and sobbing in a frightful way. I saw another woman, not strong enough to protect herself, buy a fold of bread at a stall; it was dragged from her and torn to strips like meat thrown to animals. One seldom saw a face with any happiness in it or health or pity, and one felt that the most merciful thing that could befall Kermanshah would be an earthquake or some such swift biblical visitation.

We must have saved thousands at Hamadan, Kerind, and Kermanshah by relief work on the roads. At Kermanshah we bought a large stock of grain that the Russians had left behind, and distributed it. When the American Mission first gave away food to the Kermanshahis, the mob rushed them and got in behind the store, lusty young fellows elbowing the women and children aside, and falling on the bread like wolves. The missionaries had to throw it over the heads of the strong to the weak; but this set the pack doubling back again, and there was nothing to do but to beat them off. "One cannot feed men with one hand and beat them with another," a missionary lady explained; yet it was done, and discipline introduced, by sending them empty away at the next muster.

There was food in Kermanshah for those who could afford it, and many of the people were well-to-do; but they seemed incapable of pity or any disinterested act. Our own motives were suspected. I think they regarded our relief work as a political move: they believed we were making capital out of the people's distress, which, no doubt, seemed to them a very natural thing to do. So in Teheran, when the English ladies established kitchens and fed the famine-stricken, the papers were sarcastic, saying, "The British are cunningly seeking to glorify themselves." To such intellectuals one prefers the wolfish pack. In Kermanshah I helped in the distribution of the first relief tickets. The weakest and most helpless and the least capable of work were the first to receive aid, but these were soon thrust aside and trampled on as the crowd surged in. At first one could do nothing. Infinite pity alternated with disgust. One was soon on the defensive with a whirling stick. Even so, one was robbed and looted. It was all very natural.

Nothing counts with the starving but their desperate need. The animal is bound to emerge. In the bazaars the pressure of the crowd and their cries brought on a dizziness, and one walked in a dream, and thought the people were dead and in hell—that one was oneself in hell, a spectator wandering among the damned, in nowise blessed for one's fortuitous immunity from their pain. Their ashen earthy faces stared up at one, their hands clutched at one's sleeve; their voices were more dreadful than their faces and hands. There was such a decay of body and mind everywhere—such humiliation of the flesh and despair of the spirit—that one could not conceive of any resurrection, any further punishment to come, or breath of redeeming life to revive the dull spark in the clay.

The carnage of a battlefield has a touch of sublimity in it; but in famine there is no idealism, only a degradation, enforced and pitiless, a nakedness of despair which seems the negation of a watchful and interested God. And the fairer the scene the more pitiless is this seeming neglect. Here one saw in humanity a physical and moral hideousness, as if the Almighty had relegated man to the false gods he had established by choice, leaving him to find in them what help he could; while the One Spirit dwelt and breathed in the calm serenity of the snows, in the fruit-trees whose pink-and-white blossoms fretted the sky, the fairest promise in nature, and in the mountains spread all round in their strength and beauty and repose, the inscrutable manifestation of a Providence which may withhold its message or its meaning, but which cannot ultimately lie.

THE MAN FROM THE CLOUDS.

BY J. STORER CLOUSTON.

PART II.

III. THE ALCOHOLIC PATIENT.

On a raw, grey, February morning Mr Thomas Sylvester Hobhouse bade a polite farewell to the medical gentleman who had escorted him thus far, and stepped aboard the little steamer sailing from a certain small and ancient port out into the northern isles of that archipelago. This medical escort was a typical instance of my uncle's relentless thoroughness. He was not in the secret, and so all the way from Euston to those remote islands I had to endure the ordeal of sitting under the eye of a conscientious, middle-aged gentleman with a strong Yorkshire accent and but one idea in his head: to keep in readiness to seize me at each station in case I leapt out of the carriage and headed for the refreshment-rooms. We parted, I think, with equal relief on either side.

Under a heavy sky and a chilly wind we steamed through divers waterways, touched at divers islands, and shipped and unshipped many cattle. At last, when it had turned afternoon and the wind was beginning to feel wet as well as chilly, Thomas Sylvester stepped ashore on the modest pier at Ransay. Already he had noted from the deck his prospective host, pipe in mouth and hands in his knickerbocker pockets, among a small knot of inhabitants, but to his relief there were no other familiar faces.

"Let me be firmly established as Mr Hobhouse, the doctor's new paying guest, before they look at me too closely!" he said to himself.

In the doctor's blue eyes there was not a sign of recognition or suspicion. I noticed again his habit of glancing at one askance, which had raised my ready suspicions last time we had met, but apart from that his greeting was cordial and pleasant enough.

"I've only got an open trap, Mr Hobhouse," he said, "and it's a three-mile drive. I hope you have got a warm coat."

Mr Hobhouse, I may mention, was a gentleman with an extremely polite, nervously effusive manner, who always agreed with everybody, and blinked a little as he looked at them with apologetic friendliness through his gold-rimmed glasses. Those who have seen that sprightly comedy, "Heels Up," may perhaps remember the not unsuccessful character of Sir Douglas Jenkinson, Bart. (played by Mr Roger Merton). Mr Thomas Sylvester Hobhouse would have reminded them of Sir Douglas forcibly.

"Oh yes, doctor, a beautifully warm coat; you needn't worry about me at all; I shall be very comfortable—very comfortable indeed, thank you," Mr Hobhouse assured him.

Dr Rendall eyed his patient again, and there seemed to be a gleam of satisfaction in his glance, as though this were the kind of polite acquiescent gentleman he liked.

There was a weary delay in getting my luggage out of the hold, and the February afternoon had grown greyer by the time we started in the doctor's pony trap. As the road was heavy with mud and covered with patches of loose metal every here and there, those three miles proved the longest I have ever driven. By this time the wind was sweeping clouds of fine rain into our faces, and, seen through this driving vapour, the island looked another place from the Ransay of summer-time. The flowers were gone, and the corn, and even the greenness of the grass, which now was of a pale yellowish-olive hue; and I thought that a nakeder, more inhospitable-looking spot surely man had never visited.

Under such circumstances we talked little, the doctor only making a remark now and then in a dutiful way, and Mr Hobhouse effusively agreeing with him. That gentleman was quite content to postpone his inquiries until he had got a little warmer and drier, and at times he even felt acute anxiety lest the bleak house that loomed ahead, visible afar over the treeless country, was actually moving away from them. They seemed to approach it so slowly.

Evening was near at hand when Mr Hobhouse entered his teetotal haven, and his effusiveness was quite sincere as he rubbed his hands over a blazing fire in the doctor's smoking-room, and still sincerer when he faced an excellent high tea.

The conversation naturally turned on the war, and Thomas Sylvester showed an anxiety to learn his host's opinions, and an enthusiastic agreement with each one of them that seemed to please the doctor. He became more and more talkative and genial, but though his guest mentally went through his words with a tooth-comb as he uttered them, he had to confess at the end of a chatty hour that the doctor exhibited neither any special knowledge of military and naval affairs, nor any lack of zeal for the cause of his country.

"No treason so far!" said Thomas to himself.

Then with what he flattered himself was the art which conceals art, Mr Hobhouse brought the conversation round to the subject of the doctor himself and his household. He enthusiastically assured his host that each arrangement he mentioned was the best imaginable—from the doctor's being a bachelor to his having no hot water laid on in the bathroom, but large cans brought when necessary. And presently he blinked more amiably than ever, and inquired—

"And do you often have

—er—guests, doctor—guests such as myself?"

The doctor's geniality seemed suddenly to contract a little.

"Occasionally," he said briefly.

"Quite so," agreed Mr Hobhouse. "Too often would be a great nuisance. Occasionally—yes, yes—that must be much pleasanter. Just when you feel inclined. I see. And I hope you get decent fellows as a rule, doctor. It would be very unpleasant otherwise."

"It is," said Dr Rendall with distinct emphasis.

"I trust *I* won't be a nuisance," said Mr Hobhouse anxiously.

"Oh no, no," said the doctor hurriedly; "I was thinking of——"

He broke off, and his amiable guest tactfully changed the subject. A little later, with what he hoped was equal tact, he returned to it again. Assuring the doctor of his anxiety to give no trouble, he said—

"I'll do just as the last fellow did. You just put me into his shoes, doctor, and then you'll always know where you are."

There was no doubt about the oddness of the glance which Dr Rendall shot at his guest this time. His answer was a murmur that might have meant anything. Mr Hobhouse innocently rattled on—

"I presume he fitted into your ways all right, and so will I if you tell me first what—er—you did mention his name—or didn't you?"

"O'Brien," said the doctor.

"O'Brien?" repeated Mr Hobhouse with a distinct air of distaste for so mild a gentleman.

The doctor looked at him quickly.

"Do you know him?" he asked sharply.

"Oh no, no! Oh dear me, no! It's only that I have a very foolish and very stupid prejudice against Irishmen—as I presume he was."

Mr Hobhouse laughed pleasantly, and inwardly he laughed still more pleasantly, for his shot came off.

"So have I," agreed the doctor; and there was no doubt that he was in earnest.

Mr Hobhouse decided that he had probed the matter sufficiently for the present, and with what he was now beginning to consider his usual discretion he changed the subject.

Before they parted that night he could not resist one touch of art, despite the counsels of Sir Francis.

"Before we go to bed, doctor," he said with his most ingratiating smile, "do you think one little drop would do us any harm? I feel as though I might have a little cold coming on——"

But the doctor was shaking his head, kindly but firmly.

"Well, well; better not. I quite agree with you, doctor," gushed his guest. "Good-night, doctor; good-night!"

"I wonder if the doctor ever had such a blinkin' ass in his house before!" said the amiable gentleman to himself as he shut his bedroom door behind him.

Looking at myself in the glass with a kind of chastened complacence, I decided that the man who could perceive in Mr Hobhouse any reminiscence of the mysterious young stranger of six months ago would have a singularly piercing eye. At the same time it was a sobering experience to gaze at that black-bearded gentleman, with his hair parted in the middle and brushed low down over his forehead, and his foolish-looking pince-nez, and reflect that there was no artificial difference between him and the vanished Roger Merton, save those eyeglasses and a little hair-dye. That was my own face, and my own hair, and, I presumed, my own natural latent idiocy blinking behind those glasses. I turned away from the mirror with mingled feelings.

As the hour was not late (early to bed being part of the cure) I put on my dressing-gown and sat down to smoke and chew the cud of my evening's conversation with Dr Rendall. The more I saw of him, the more favourably, on the whole, the man impressed me. He was a gentleman, and seemed a good fellow. Being a bachelor with outdoor tastes and an easy-going disposition, it was not at all impossible to understand him choosing the estate of his family to settle down on, isolated though it was. Certainly one could not honestly charge it against him as a suspicious circumstance.

By far the most interesting discovery was his obvious dislike to Mr O'Brien. Not once, but several times, he had shown it in the course of our talk. He conveyed the suggestion, moreover, that the man had oppressed him in some way, and that it was a relief to have got rid of him. In view of the fact that he had been so anxious to secure another resident patient, this seemed a little odd, and a theory began to take shape in my mind. Supposing O'Brien had in some way induced the doctor unwillingly to abet a treasonable scheme, that would account for his feelings very well, especially looking to O'Brien's unpleasing personality. But, on the other hand, events had made it clear that treason was going on without O'Brien, so how could the doctor have got clear of it? And if he were still in it, this theory of his relations to his late patient was manifestly weak.

"To bed!" said Thomas Sylvester to himself, after an hour of these reflections. "You are theorising too soon."

In the morning he was up betimes and downstairs a good ten minutes before he knew the doctor was likely to appear. Into the smoking-room he went, shut the door carefully behind him, and made for the window. A grey and windy prospect met his eyes, but they scarcely glanced at it. Mr Hobhouse had something else to think of. Twice or thrice he pulled the blind up and down, and minutely examined the string and the little brass pulley.

"That blind certainly does not come down at a touch," he said to himself, "and there is not a sign of its having been repaired within the last few years. Therefore it did not drop accidentally six months ago."

IV. THE TEST.

That afternoon, as the weather had cleared somewhat, Dr Rendall proposed walking over to his cousin's house, and presenting Mr Hobhouse to the laird and his daughter. This ordeal had to be undergone sooner or later, so I decided I had better fall in with his suggestion and get it over at once. Besides, it was an obvious part of my programme to make a great deal of outdoor exercise a principal feature of Mr Hobhouse's cure, and I felt bound to agree at once with any proposal to take a walk. We had taken the precaution, by the way, of telling the doctor beforehand of my limp (caused by a motoring accident when I was at the wheel in a condition I should not have been in), and assuring him that the surgeon encouraged exercise to complete the cure. So off we set for the "big house."

On the way the doctor gave his guest a certain amount of general information concerning the people they were going to meet, but as Mr Hobhouse happened to know it already, it need not be chronicled here.

As the pair approached the weather-beaten old mansion, looking now in its true setting against the wintry sky, Thomas Sylvester became acutely conscious of the return of a familiar sensation. It was, in fact, precisely the sensation which one Roger Merton had enjoyed when waiting for his cue to step from dim obscurity into the flare of the footlights on the first night of a new drama. Would his old acquaintances accept Mr Hobhouse without question as an entire stranger? If he spied so much as one suspicious questioning glance, his whole scheme was exploded.

We were shown into the drawing-room, and, to my great relief, Mr Rendall was the first to appear, for I felt I could stand the scrutiny of Jean's bright eyes a deal more readily if I had once got into the swing of talk with her father. In his eye there was certainly no trace of question. With his dry and formidable courtesy he greeted Mr Hobhouse, and in a minute or two they were talking away in that friendly fashion which Mr Hobhouse was pleased to notice people fell into very readily with him. And small wonder, for the creature was so grossly affable and (if I say it myself) so infernally plausible.

His great hobby, it appeared, was antiquarian research, and though he let slip a few remarks that showed he was well versed in his subject, his rôle, as usual, was that of the flatteringly eager inquirer.

Needless to say, his learning had been acquired by diligent application within the last week, and that it had a very definite object behind it. The laird had but a smattering of the subject, but being an intelligent well-read man, he was quite able to discuss Mr Hobhouse's favourite pursuit, so that when his daughter entered the room she found herself in an atmosphere as little reminiscent of the mysterious stranger as it was possible to create in the time.

All the same, it was an anxious moment when Jean's eyes first fell upon him, and he heaved a deep sigh of relief when he saw not a spark of recognition in them. On his part, Thomas Sylvester was scrupulously careful to avoid the least resemblance to the conduct of the mysterious Merton, even in the smallest point. There was no assurance, no tribute of attention and consciousness of her presence, such as a girl as charming as Miss Rendall has the right to expect from every man with an eye in his head, and which I must confess the mysterious stranger used to pay her, for all her dislike to him. Mr Hobhouse, of course, was dreadfully polite, but seemed a little shy of the sex, and after a few commonplaces on either side she turned to her cousin, and he to his host.

Tea was brought in, and the party chatted away as amicably as any party of four in the kingdom. Thomas had found his tea-party legs by this time, and quite enjoyed the situation. Mr Rendall impressed him much more favourably than he had impressed Roger Merton. The grimness seemed to fall off the man when one got him going in talk, and a vein of kindliness opened instead.

"I'm dashed if there seems to be anything suspicious in anybody this time!" said Mr Hobhouse to himself rather disconsolately.

He had hardly made this reflection when he happened to glance at Jean. This, as a matter of fact, had happened several times previously. For one thing, she was looking a picture, and for another, the alcoholic visitor liked to reassure himself at intervals that she was still without shadow of suspicion. And each time he had felt perfectly reassured.

But this time he was conscious of a sudden thrill of certainty that Miss Rendall had been covertly studying him, and that now (though her eyes turned away instantly) she had some new food for thought. Instantly he asked for another cup of tea, and blinked at her benignantly as their eyes met. Did he actually read in hers confirmation of his first instinctive feeling, or was it only a too quick imagination? Mr Hobhouse wondered very seriously.

Thereafter, for some little time, as he talked with her father, he was acutely aware that both she and the doctor were very silent, and when now and then he glanced at her, she seemed to be thinking

rather than listening. And then, just as he was beginning to grow a trifle uneasy, this phase seemed to pass away, and the next time he looked at her she met his glance with a faint smile. In fact, she had smiled several times before the doctor and his patient took their departure, and, as they shook hands at the end, Thomas Sylvester was agreeably conscious of the kindest look she had ever favoured him with. And finally, when her father hoped they might see their new acquaintance soon again, she joined him in hoping, both with her words and (it seemed to him) her eyes.

During the first part of their walk home Mr Hobhouse was very silent. Going back over their call, while everything was fresh in his memory, he had to confess that his prejudices against Mr Rendall were ready to vanish altogether if he were ready to let them. In fact, the grim ironic Mr Rendall, conversing with the suspicious stranger, was an entirely different person from the friendly Mr Rendall who conversed with the innocent-looking Thomas Sylvester Hobhouse. On the face of it this was obviously to be explained by his suspicions of the stranger. But of what did he suspect him? Of being a German spy, as he professed? Or of being what he was? That was the whole point, and it seemed to me that getting him arrested and removed was equally consistent with either alternative.

But what of his daughter, that slim, dangerously dainty piece of mystery? Were her two changes of attitude in the course of this afternoon mere mirages seen by an eye disordered by suspicion? They might be, but Mr Hobhouse was prepared to stake his davy that they were real. And what, then, did they imply? Surely not that she suspected the truth. He could not read them into that. That she was simply a coquette, and for want of more amusing game (such, for instance, as Mr O'Brien) was prepared to have a little flirtation with his successor? This was, somehow or other, not a very agreeable solution, but I began to suspect it might be the true one. In any case she was a puzzling factor, and the best course of action seemed to me to be to avoid her society in the meanwhile, and to keep my eyes wide open for possible trouble. I hardly thought there would be trouble, but it were well to be on the look-out.

This being decided, the amiable Mr Hobhouse started conversation with the doctor, and gradually by gentle and circuitous methods led the talk, *vid* the war in general, to the part in the war played by these islands, and to any interesting events that might have happened in them. He was heading in his devious way for the visit of the suspicious stranger, but at this point the doctor brought him in of his own accord.

"We had one most extraordinary thing happen in this place," said he. "Nobody has got to the bottom of it yet."

"Really!" cried Mr Hobhouse. "How very interesting! What was it?"

"Well," said the doctor, "one morning when I had that fellow O'Brien staying with me, a young man walked into my house under the impression —so he said—that it was my cousin's. Whether he told the truth or not I've often wondered since. He had no cap, was buttoned up in an oilskin coat (though I may say it was a fine morning), and talked with a distinct foreign accent. I could swear it was German, but O'Brien, who contradicted everything, stuck to it that it was Russian. A lot he knew about Russian! He was only in the house about five minutes, for when he discovered his mistake —or what he said was his mistake—he went off. And that is all I saw of him personally."

"But did he go to Mr Rendall's, then?"

The doctor nodded.

"He turned up there and spent two or three nights in the house. The chap had the impudence of the devil. He said he had been landed from one of our own cruisers and didn't want to be recognised as an officer, so would they be kind enough to lend him a coat and let him lock his uniform coat up in a drawer! He was in his oilskin all this time, you must remember. A day or two later my cousins grew suspicious and opened that drawer. What do you think they found?"

"Maps!" guessed Mr Hobhouse.

"Nothing at all! He had never had a uniform coat. They promptly wired to the Naval Authorities, locked him in his room meanwhile, and when Commander Whiteclett appeared he arrested him and took him off."

"And who was he?"

The doctor turned to his guest with an expression of considerable indignation.

"The damned secrecy of these Navy people is past belief! Do you know that not even my cousins who caught the man for them were ever told a single word about him! Whiteclett took him straight off to his drifter without so much as saying good-bye—much less thank you—to my cousin Philip, and that was the last of it!"

"Then you never learned who the fellow was?"

"He gave his name as Merton—George, or was it Roger? Merton. But you can believe as much of that as you like."

"And did he land from a cruiser?"

"Not likely! But nobody was ever told how he did land. They found what they said was a parachute, but it's my belief that was either a blind or it was really some kind of collapsible boat. I never saw the thing myself, and O'Brien, who did see it, having heard somebody say it was a parachute, of course swore it was not."

"And did the man do nothing while he was on the island?"

"God knows what he may not have done! Naturally, he told nobody what he was after,

and no one actually saw him doing anything; but there are plenty of stories."

"What kind of stories?"

"Oh, the usual kind—that he was seen flashing lights on the shore and carrying petrol tins. But you can believe as much of them as you like."

"And have your cousins no theory? They apparently saw a good deal of him."

"My cousin Philip says frankly he is absolutely beaten by the whole performance. Jean—well, girls are rum things."

"What are Miss Rendall's views, then?" I inquired.

"She is generally quick enough at guessing, and as fond of gossip as most of her sex, but for some reason she keeps very quiet about it. It's my belief she knows something. In fact, I shouldn't be surprised if Whiteclett had told her a little and sworn her to secrecy. Men do tell women things sometimes, as I daresay you have noticed for yourself, Mr Hobhouse."

"What a very strange story!" murmured Mr Hobhouse.

So this was the tale of my escapade as it was told in Ransay. The doctor's manner of telling it was the best guarantee of his own good faith I could wish, and I was ready now to dismiss the blind incident as a misleading trifle. But O'Brien seemed to have gone out of his way to throw doubt on every point raised, and, curiously enough, to have always offered a wrong solution. It might be sheer contrariness, but it struck me as odd. As to Miss Jean's silence, what did that mean? I resolved to keep my eyes very wide open indeed.

V. WAITING.

By a fortunate chance Dr Rendall was no expert in antiquarian matters, and yet had sufficient respect for those who were to give them every encouragement and make all allowances for any irregularity in their hours caused thereby. Mr Hobhouse possessed several very learned-looking volumes, such as 'The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland,' 'The Windy Isles in Early Celtic Times,' 'Ecclesiological Notes on some of the Islands of Scotland,' and other tomes of that nature; and from these he could quote whole paragraphs without so much as pausing for breath (in fact, he dared not pause, lest he forgot). Mr Hobhouse, moreover, talked in his garrulous way of adding his own modest contribution to this literature in the shape of a monograph on the antiquities of Ransay.

With this end in view it was therefore very natural that he should spend much of his time rambling over the island, particularly along the coasts, where he declared the early monuments he was especially interested in were mostly to be found, and should

even at times be detained by his enthusiasm till darkness had fallen. It was also very natural that he should wish to consult all the most ancient inhabitants, and should in consequence seek out and interview every native over sixty years of age. In short, this hobby not only gave this enthusiastic gentleman a sound pretext for being in the most out-of-the-way places at the most unlikely hours, but also for inspecting narrowly with his own eyes each white-bearded patriarch who might, or might not, have worn six months ago a pair of tinted spectacles; which—to descend slightly in the literary scale—accounts for the milk in the cocoanut.

All this, of course, was not only perceived by his guardian medical attendant, but blessed with his strong approval, for nothing counteracts the taste for liquor so effectually as another hobby. But what Thomas Sylvester devoutly prayed the doctor did not see was his patient slipping out of his window in the small hours of the morning, and from the roof of an outhouse just below examining the shore through a night-glass. In February and March weather this was far too uncomfortable to last long or to be repeated every night, and the shore was too far away to make it very effective. Still, he did think he noticed a glimmer once or twice, and each time his antiquarian expedition next day included certain artless inquiries which might have thrown some light on the matter had the answers been satisfactory. As a matter of fact, however, they never were, and the extraordinary appearance of interest with which the effusive gentleman listened to useless information reflected more credit on his resolution than any one will ever realise.

I may add that the professional watchers in the island were not of course in the secret of Mr Hobhouse's identity, and therefore could not report to him directly anything they might see or suspect. But if they did see or suspect anything, he would very quickly be informed through another source. However, Commander Whiteclett based no great hopes on the possibility of catching our wily enemy out by means of a palpable man in uniform, and Mr H. had been instructed to act exactly as though he were alone on the job.

One of his earliest expeditions was made to the site of a prehistoric building in the near vicinity of the Scollays' farm—at least there was a grassy knoll visible which Mr H.'s expert eye at once pronounced to be worthy of very careful inspection, and in order to confirm his theories he decided to visit the farm to make inquiry as to any possible traditions regarding it.

He passed round the knoll with this purpose, to discover that he was no longer meditating alone. A familiar figure confronted him, with dark staring eyes, gaping mouth, and stubbly beard—my old friend Jock. For a moment there

returned that feeling of stage fright. Next to the Rendalls, the Scollay household, and particularly Jock, had seen and conversed most often with the mysterious Merton. Jock was only an idiot, but where reason is lacking instinct is apt to be strong, and instinct might distinguish an old acquaintance through all my disguise. Anyhow, rightly or wrongly, I felt that this was another delicate moment.

"Good-day, my good fellow. Good-day to you!" said the friendly Mr Hobhouse. "A little better weather to-day!"

The surprise of the affable gentleman at getting only a grunt in reply, his air of gradual comprehension, and then of friendly sympathy, were acted for all they were worth. And, to my vast relief, Jock showed no glimmer of recognition of the young man with the revolver.

"Do you know who lives at that farm?" inquired Mr Hobhouse, speaking very distinctly. "Tolly, you say? Oh, jolly? Yes, very jolly! Ha, ha! Good-bye, my lad, good-bye to you!"

Jock's hoot of laughter was answered by Mr Hobhouse's giggle, and they set off down to the farm, the antiquary in front limping rather more markedly than usual, and the idiot rambling behind.

The visit to the Scollays was a distinct success, so far as establishing the personality of Mr Thomas Sylvester Hobhouse went. At first they looked at him with an obvious suspicion, and replied to his questions with a reticence that gave him a few uneasy moments. But in ten minutes his indefatigable friendliness had conquered the household, and he knew that he was safe to visit that knoll whenever the fancy took him. Peter senior told him a long story about the fairies who were seen dancing round the knoll in his father's time, and though his family were evidently a little distressed by his reference to anything so unfashionable, and Jock hooted several times, their visitor exhibited the liveliest interest, and put the tale religiously down in his note-book.

This was all that could be done at the moment — the establishment of a perfectly harmless reputation and of a natural reason for visiting that particular place at odd times. Mr Hobhouse obtained permission to do a little digging there if he desired it, and parted with the family on the best of terms.

"Slow work!" he said to himself as he struck out for home, with his limp rapidly vanishing. "But what the devil else can one do? What is there definite to take hold of?"

That was the baffling feature of the business. As my cousin said, such scent as there was had grown cold by this time, and one had to begin at the beginning again. And so far there seemed to be no beginning. The detectives of fiction might have found some clue to start a train of logical and inevitable reasoning that led straight to the criminal, but the detective of fact had

utterly failed, and the brilliant young amateur of fact was likewise completely at sea.

What good, for instance, had my visit to the Scollays done? I asked myself. If they were innocent, I had wasted my time. If they were guilty, what had I discovered to bring it home to them? Absolutely nothing! And the same with each inhabitant of that island whom I had seen. Some cunning and powerful organisation was certainly at work, to the detriment of my country, but the only point I had scored against them was that I had got into the place without their recognising me. At least I presumed I had, or I should scarcely still be alive to tell the tale — unless they had grown either more merciful or more timid since I was here last. And their continued immunity would scarcely be likely to produce either of those effects.

The only specific thing I could think of looking for was the old man with the tinted spectacles. So far I was well on the way to proving one thing about him, and that the least satisfactory thing I could prove. Apparently Bolton was right, and no such person existed. Therefore I was as far off catching him as ever, and had merely the added certainty that my enemies were extremely resourceful, and spared no trouble to make sure of things when in doubt. However, I meant to go on looking till I had exhausted all the old men in the place. I was about half-way through them by this time, so far as I could calculate.

Thus the winter days passed, growing longer but no warmer and no finer. One would have had early touches of spring by this time in the South, but here it was still winter undiluted. The violence and frequency of the winds was amazing. Indeed, I seldom remember having less than a stiff breeze, and every now and then a full tearing, howling gale would scour the bare low-lying island till it seemed as if even the houses could scarcely stand up to it much longer, while the sea would be one bewildering chaos of breaking and subsiding crests, white against the leaden furrows, surging on till they smashed into a continuous line of foam along our iron coast.

How the wind howled and whistled round that melancholy mansion of the doctor's! I forget who had built it, or why — some land-agent or factor, I think, who had once lived on the estate — but I know I frequently cursed him. It stood up just high enough to catch the full force of every blast that blew, and not quite high enough to get a really fine view. There was too much bleak foreground — so that one got no value from the site whatever, so far as I could see. And, lord, it was draughty!

My only company was the doctor, and he was out most of the day. Even at nights I began to find him a curiously moody companion. There were moments when my suspicions

revived again; he used to glance at me furtively, leave the room mysteriously for half an hour at a time, and do little more than grunt when he was spoken to. And then next day he would be such a pleasant, sensible, downright sort of fellow that I could only remember his simple telling of the tale of my own visit, and dismiss him from my calculations.

And so life went on for some three weeks uneventfully enough for a desperate and disguised adventurer. I received several letters from my uncle, and I was thankful it had been arranged I should not answer them. The dear man had evidently such a twopenny-coloured conception of the hazardous life I was leading that a truthful recital of my adventures might have brought him down in person to stir things up. But there was nothing to stir: I could only wait.

VI. THE SPECTACLED MAN.

It was, I remember, on a rare day of bright, still, frosty weather that Mr Hobhouse returned a little late for the doctor's midday dinner. The garrulous creature was looking thoughtful and, as it were, subdued—wanting a dram, no doubt thought any who chanced to spy him in this unusual condition. But as he opened the front door he became his foolish self instantaneously. The sound of a strange voice had reached him distinctly.

"Let me introduce Captain Whiteclett — Mr Hobhouse," said the doctor.

He and the stranger had already begun dinner, and Commander Whiteclett rose and bowed politely. Mr Hobhouse bowed still more politely, and having the advantage of being at the doctor's back for the moment, was able to embellish his low obeisance with several curious facial expressions. The Commander at the same moment was attacked with a sharp bout of coughing, but presently recovering, the meal proceeded very pleasantly.

It appeared that Commander Whiteclett was visiting the island in the course of a tour of inspection, and having some acquaintance with the doctor, had dropped in for lunch. He seemed pleased to meet Mr Hobhouse, and was as affable as naval officers always are, though every now and then it might have been noticed by a very close observer that after meeting that gentleman's eye he showed a tendency to stare suddenly out of the window for several moments. Mr Hobhouse on his part was in his most gushing humour, and in fact chatted almost continuously through the meal.

As they passed out of the dining-room ahead of the doctor the two guests exchanged a whisper, and about a quarter of an hour later Mr Hobhouse declared that he

must set forth and resume his antiquarian researches, and effusively bade the Commander good-bye. Thereupon the Commander said he also must be off, and wondered in which direction his fellow-guest was walking. It chanced that they were both going the same way, and so they departed together.

"Well, you ridiculous-looking dipsomaniac, how do you like water for dinner?" inquired the Commander when they were safely out of earshot.

"It lies cold on the tummy," said I, "and if you've brought a flask, Jack——"

"I have," said my cousin, "but wait a bit till there are no witnesses. And by the way, old chap, I must tell you that you're a d——d good actor."

"My photograph has appeared in the 'Tatler,'" I confessed.

"And what news?" he asked.

"Up till this morning I should have said 'none.' My dear Jack, it has been the most hopelessly baffling business you can possibly imagine. I think I am quite a success as an alcoholic patient, and also accepted by this time as the typical harmless antiquary. So I am able to wander all over the place and talk to everybody, but there has been nothing to take hold of. I have seen no sign of anything happening——" I caught his eye and asked quickly, "Has anything happened?"

He nodded.

"Signalling night before last and a submarine seen yesterday that we suspect of having been here."

"Under my nose!" I groaned. "A fat lot of good I am!"

"My dear chap, you can't possibly watch the whole coast all night and every night. This time the signals were seen from the sea as a matter of fact. But you can note the night, and also the hour, which was 2.45 A.M., G.M.T., as near as I can make out from the report. By the way, you had better set your watch by mine now while we remember. Possibly you may be able to discover who was out at that hour night before last."

"I may, but it's a thousand to one against it. Give me a thousand such chances, and I'll get him! That's just about how it seems to work out, so far."

"Haven't you got any new ideas?"

"Without new evidence, what new ideas can one get? And I only got my first piece of evidence this morning. In fact, I haven't had time to think it over yet."

"Let's hear it," said my cousin keenly.

"I have been on the track of that old boy with spectacles, as being the only definite thing to look for, so far. I did what Bolton did—went to see every old man in the place, and this morning I polished off the last of them, and came to the same conclusion as he did. There is no such old gentleman on the island. But there *was* one, for a short time, one morning; and he was a fake like Thomas Sylvester Hobhouse; and this

morning I've heard of some one else who saw him!"

"By Gad!" exclaimed my cousin. "That sounds like the beginning of business."

"Only the beginning, I'm afraid. This morning I interviewed my last old man—to find, of course, he wasn't the fellow I was after. I interviewed him on the usual subject—ancient traditions of the island, and from that we passed on to the latest tradition, the legend of the mysterious visitor last August. He told me all about it, with many embellishments. However, he was shrewd enough not to believe all he heard; and to show me what absurd stories are put about, he informed me that his own small granddaughter, aged six, had declared that she had seen the mysterious visitor, only she described him as having a white beard and funny spectacles. I asked him exactly where this phenomenon had been observed, and, by Jingo, Jack, it was at the very place I met him; only when she saw him he had left the road, and was hurrying down to the sea. She described him as running, which finally demolished her reputation for truthfulness, for, as her grandfather observed, men of his age don't run. But that was my friend right enough!"

"Heading for the sea?"

"For the beach, I take it. You see, you can pop over the edge almost anywhere along that shore, and get out of sight among the rocks in a moment. I presume he squatted down there, pocketed his spectacles and beard, took off his disreputable overcoat, and either hid it or possibly pinned up the skirts, and put it on under his other coat, and walked off looking like—well, that's the rub, what did he look like then? And that's just where I seem no forrader."

"Still, this is something."

"Yes, and I suppose we ought to deduce something more from the episode. I've already concluded that the high piping voice he used might well have concealed an accent, and I've also decided, from what I've heard of the local language since, that he hadn't the native intonation."

"And he headed for the beach," added my cousin. "Therefore he certainly did not come from any house in the near neighbourhood."

"That puts the doctor's house out of court, if you're right. But he may possibly have thought it better not to do his dressing up at home."

"I see you've still got your knife into O'Brien!" laughed my cousin. "But I think my notion is the likeliest——"

He broke off suddenly, and we instinctively moved a pace farther apart. A figure had appeared round a turn of the road just ahead of us—a trim dainty figure, delightful to see in such a place, but a little disconcerting to see so suddenly and so close to us. It was Jean Rendall, looking her best, but not, it seemed to me, quite in the right place.

Had she noticed anything? There was not a sign of it in her greeting. She gave us both one of her quick smiles,

and as Jack pulled up to speak to her, she stopped too, and in talking to him I noticed afresh how full of expression those neatly chiselled, rather petite features became when she talked, and what a charming little air of knowing her way about the world she had. Young though she was, I could see in her very clearly either a valuable friend or a dangerous enemy — and what an easy girl to fall in love with, had circumstances been very different!

Jack explained in a very natural offhand manner how he came to be in Mr Hobhouse's company, and Mr Hobhouse corroborated his statement in his own effusive way. And then, as we parted, she threw her smile full on that gentleman, and asked—

"Why haven't you been to see us again, Mr Hobhouse? Do come to tea one day!"

Mr Hobhouse gabbled a polite but slightly evasive reply, and we walked on.

"Do you mean to say," demanded my cousin, "that you have only been to see this delectable lady once?"

"That's all," I admitted.

"What's the reason? It isn't very like your methods, Roger."

"It isn't," I admitted again. "But then, you see, what with pestilential weather and all these antiquarian visits to pay, my available time has been pretty well occupied."

"But that house is one to keep a particular eye on."

"That house has got a pair of particularly bright eyes in it. On my one visit there I felt a little too like walking on the edge of a precipice to wish to repeat the experience often. If that girl suspects me, Jack, and *if* she isn't the right sort, we are dished."

"Oh, dash it. I can't believe she's mixed up in this business!" he declared. "Of course one mustn't trust anybody; still, that doesn't prevent your going to tea with her. In fact, what you really ought to be doing is making love to her—so long as you keep your head."

"I am handicapped," I pointed out, "by drunken habits, a beard, and Mother Beagle's Beautiful Black Dye. No, Jack, I do not see orange-blossom this trip."

"Apart from these romantic dreams," persisted my cousin, "she is far more likely to be inquisitive about you if you never go near the house. In fact, I could see it in her eye to-day."

"Well," I said, "I'll call to-morrow and dispel her interest in me."

Since my talk with the doctor, his theory about Jean Rendall had crossed my mind occasionally, and improbable as it was, I thought I might as well test it.

"By the way," I asked, "did you by any chance ever speak to Miss Rendall about my last visit to the island?"

His look of surprise was a sufficient answer in itself.

"Speak to her of your adventure? Not a word at any time! Why?"

"The doctor has an idea

that she knows more than she says, and that you may have told her something."

"Rubbish!"

"I knew it was," I assured him.

And so that possibility was finally eliminated.

We thought it wiser that our ways should part some little distance from the pier.

"Good luck, old chap," said he, shaking my hand. "Keep playing the game you're at, and don't worry about trying to keep a look-out at nights. That's being done already, and though I don't believe the fellows are much use—not with such crafty devils against them—you can't do anything to help 'em. Getting out at night is too risky, and you're too far away at the house. Your game is to work it from the other end. Sooner or later they are absolutely bound to give you a clue."

His spirit and my little discovery of the morning sent me back in a distinctly more hopeful mood.

VII. A REMINISCENCE.

Next day I set out in the early afternoon to pay my call. The fine weather still held—bright sunshine with a nip in the air, and the road underfoot firm with frost—and I strode along in a wonderfully confident mood, all things considered. For, to tell the truth, I had been funking this visit. Instinctively I did not trust myself with Miss Jean Rendall. If she had any suspicions, and if she turned on to me the art of her sex and the charms of her particular self, I was well aware that Thomas Sylvester would have a bad time of it. In fact I really dared not answer for the fellow's nerve. He being both critical and susceptible, a girl with Jean's distinctive aroma was dangerous company with a job of this kind on hand; and playing the whisky-enfeebled fool in a dirty black beard ceased entirely to amuse me when the other party was Miss Rendall. However, this afternoon Mr Hobhouse felt braver, and stepped out briskly, resolved to do his bit.

As he approached the house the front door opened, and the very lady herself appeared. She carried a stick, and was evidently setting forth on a walk.

"This is very nice of you to come so soon, Mr Hobhouse," she said. "I am glad I hadn't gone farther before you appeared."

"Oh, but don't let me stop you, Miss Rendall," said Mr Hobhouse anxiously. "Really, I can't allow it; no, no, really not. You mustn't turn back, indeed you mustn't! Perhaps I shall find Mr Rendall at home."

"I was only going for a walk to nowhere in particular." She looked at him with an irresistible mixture of coyness and frankness, and suggested "Would you care to come for a

little walk too? It's far too early for tea."

What could the poor gentleman do? He gushed over the suggestion, of course, and accepted it.

"I was going to walk down to the shore," she said. "Will that suit you?"

Mr Hobhouse assured her that anywhere would suit him; he had no choice at all: anywhere, everywhere, nowhere would be all the same to him.

As they walked side by side down towards the sea, he was suddenly struck with the sense of being in a familiar situation, of a repetition of something that had happened before. And then he realised that this was actually the walk that the same girl and a young man, Merton, had taken on a memorable August night. He noted through his glasses the very wall behind which he had lit his pipe when the flare of his match revealed the butt-end of a pistol, and presently they were following the same winding way above the beach.

This did not serve to make the playing of his part any the easier. It filled him, in fact, with a continual fear of giving himself away by doing something he had done before. It was really a most irrational fear; but there it was. Under the circumstances his sustained babble and blink were distinctly creditable.

But what gave him a more excusable cause for apprehension was Miss Rendall's own attitude. That there was something on her mind, something behind her words, he felt morally certain. She spoke in the most natural way and on the most commonplace topics, but there were frequent silences, and it was during those he felt that without looking directly at him she was watching him. And once or twice he got it into his head that she was a little puzzled and uncertain, though whether it was about what to think or what to do he had no conception. He told himself that all this was only his own morbid imagination. Still, it made that walk an uncomfortable ordeal, and seldom did actor have to work harder to keep his end up.

Luckily, however, the man had the virtue of impudence, and not only did he manage to entertain the lady with a garrulous account of his antiquarian researches (reasoning acutely that women are seldom experts in such matters), but he even ventured to broach a delicate subject for his own ends.

"The gentleman who—er—resided with Dr Rendall last summer was not, I believe, very interested in antiquities," he observed. "Did you know him, Miss Rendall? Mr O'Brien was his name, I believe."

"Yes," she said, "I knew Mr O'Brien."

There was certainly no trace of any feeling, whether of like or dislike, in her voice.

"Not a very pleasant fellow, I believe," Mr Hobhouse went on. "At least I should judge not; I should gather not. But I trust he wasn't a friend of yours, Miss Rendall?"

"Not a particular friend.

But why do you think he was unpleasant?"

"Oh, only from Dr Rendall's references to him—only from that, I assure you," said Mr Hobhouse with propitiating eagerness.

"Really?" said she, her eyes opening.

There was no doubt that this information genuinely surprised her.

"I thought they seemed great friends," she added.

"Oh, they may have been—they may have been. I may be doing Mr O'Brien an injustice. Possibly I misunderstood your relative—quite possibly."

She was silent for a little while after this, and Mr Hobhouse too ceased chatting. He was eyeing the shore-line very curiously, and trying to piece together his recollections of it.

"I think, perhaps, we have gone far enough now," said she, and for a minute or two they stood still; and a very distinct sense of being in a familiar situation was borne in upon her companion.

And then all at once she exclaimed—

"Do you hear anything?"

I started and stared at her. For the moment I had ceased to be Mr Hobhouse, so straight had I been carried back to that night six months ago. Those were her very words, and if I were not much mistaken this was the very place. I nearly answered as I had answered before, but was just able to check myself. And then she broke the spell by laughing.

"It's only the sea! But it sounded so funny and hollow."

There was indeed a low gurgle just audible, as if the waves were breaking into some cave. It struck me that she must have singularly sharp ears to have noticed it. We stood there for a minute or two longer, and then she asked—

"Do you see any ancient remains, Mr Hobhouse?"

It was not, in fact, ancient remains that the eye-glasses were looking at, but I jumped at the chance of making sure of my bearings, and with an appearance of great eagerness told her that there seemed to be something decidedly interesting in the appearance of the rocks at that place.

"I can wait for a moment if you'd like to look at them nearer," she said.

"This is luck!" I said to myself as I scrambled down. "I believe I've found the actual place."

A few minutes' exploration left no doubt in my mind. I found the very cliff-face under which I had been decoyed, and was able to clear up one point. A man above could easily have struck at me with some implement, say, six feet long. I shut my eyes and pictured that curved mystery, and then in a flash I had it—a scythe-blade tied to a pole! If I could find a scythe-blade fastened to a pole, or a blade and pole separate, I should not be far off the end of my quest. The next moment I smiled at my own optimism when I realised what a house-to-house hunt that would imply. Still, I saw a

fresh possibility, and came back silently thanking my guide.

Conversation was rather easier coming back, perhaps because I felt in higher spirits, and could play my absurd part with more gusto. Still, the girl remained a little disquieting. She was now in a very smiling and friendly mood, and a man who blinked through gold-rimmed glasses and giggled through a dyed beard ought to have felt exceedingly flattered. But now I was saying to myself that, for a girl of fastidious taste, she was really too nice to such a fellow. And then I remembered that O'Brien had a black beard too, and the thought struck me—

"Can she have such pleasant recollections of black beards that I am providing her with reminiscent romance?"

I think it was just as this idea occurred to me that she roused me very sharply from my meditations.

"I suppose you have heard of the mysterious man who appeared here last summer?" she inquired.

It took Mr Hobhouse all his time to adjust himself to this question, but I think he managed it not unsuccessfully.

"The—ah? Oh yes, oh yes. The doctor told me the story. Most mysterious—most mysterious! What do you make of it yourself, Miss Rendall?"

"Did the doctor tell you that I once walked with him along this very shore? It was at night too, and he was armed with a pistol!"

A single stare of astonishment was fortunately able to cover two emotions. My own was expressed in the thought, "What the devil is she driving at now?" Mr Hobhouse's was expressed otherwise.

"You don't say so! God bless me—what a risk to run! He didn't—er—shoot at you, I hope?"

"No," she said, "he seemed pretty harmless."

"Ah, but you shouldn't run such risks, my dear young lady; you really shouldn't! Now I remember a young lady whom I used to know——" And thereupon Mr Hobhouse launched into an improbable anecdote which tried his inventive powers considerably. However, he was able to make it, and the comments thereupon, last till they were back at the house.

The fact was that my hardihood was not quite sufficient to stand a conversation about my own self behind my own back. It might have been amusing, and it might have been instructive, but it would certainly have been embarrassing. However, the incident served to reassure me that whatever she suspected me of (and I could not get that sense of being watched out of my head), it was not the correct suspicion. Had she guessed the truth, I could see no point at all in her reminiscence of the mysterious stranger, unless it were sheer pointless mischief, and she did not seem a pointless lady. Besides, when I glanced at myself in the drawing-room mirror, I said to myself, "Who could possibly guess!"

After that walk, tea and a

talk with her father were unexciting episodes. She kept very much in the background, but when we parted I seemed to note again that flicker of a very alluring smile.

"Can it be that she has a morbid taste for inebriates?" I wondered. "One has heard of women with curiously diseased fancies. Or, perhaps, she has simply a passion for reforming them. One of those smiles for every sober hour would be a distinct inducement to behave!"

But this was not business, and as I walked home I turned my thoughts sternly to that scythe-blade.

VIII. H.M.S. *URUGUAY.*

As I neared my bleak sanatorium I said to myself, "If only something would happen!"

Week after week spent within those walls or in wandering over this limited space of muddy roads and sodden fields, with nothing to show for it, was an unexhilarating prospect. Perhaps the recollection of the comfortable house and the pleasant company I had just left accentuated this feeling, and the swift disappearance of our glimpse of crispness and sunshine did nothing to raise the heart. In that low-lying isle one got the most extraordinary views of the weather, and could see storms approaching when they were still leagues away, and portents of rain or wind hours ahead of their coming. This evening the frost had vanished, the sun was sinking into a grey-blue bank, little filaments of wind-clouds were reaching all over the sky, and a stiff, chilly breeze was already blowing in from the sea.

"We are going to have a change," I thought.

And we were indeed going to have a change—and of more than weather. Those storm-clouds were blowing up the something I wanted to happen, though how promptly would I have changed my wish had I but guessed! But Fate had loosed that nor'-west gale, and there was no stopping the order of things now.

In the night I remember waking once or twice to hear the wind shouting down the chimney, and to feel very snug in bed. When I got up it was still blowing a full gale, and, looking out of my window, I could just catch a glimpse of the masts and funnels of a large steamer which seemed to be lying under the lee side of the island for shelter. What she was precisely I could not see enough of her to say, nor when we met at breakfast did the doctor know more about her.

Like many a storm that springs up very suddenly, this one began to subside as fast, and in the course of the morning I set out to have a closer look at the strange ship. Quarter of an hour's

walk in that direction told me all I wanted to know about her. In fact I recognised her as no stranger at all, but an old acquaintance —H.M.S. *Uruguay*, a great lump of an ex-liner once running to South American ports with a band in the saloon at nights. Now, painted grey, with the white ensign flying over her, and some hundreds of bluejackets and a formidable complement of 6-inch guns aboard, she was one of those auxiliary cruisers which have been doing so many odd jobs and getting through so much dirty, risky, arduous work during this war.

What had brought her under the lee of Ransay I could but guess — some engine trouble and that gale on top of it most probably; but there she was, and there were the islanders standing at each door gazing at her. I gazed too for a while, and then came back to our early dinner.

Going out again in the afternoon, the affable Mr Hobhouse was passing the time of day with a couple of petty officers within five minutes, and as he continued his walk he saw that, whatever was the reason, H.M.S. *Uruguay* was not going to leave immediately. The wind had now fallen to a stiff breeze, and, as she lay under the shelter of the island, shore-leave had evidently been given to a number of the men. First at one farm and then at another he could spy parties of bluejackets buying butter and eggs, poultry and cheeses, everything fresh from the land they could get. It was cheerful to see them again, and yet one uncomfortable thought did cross my mind as I looked at their great grey ship anchored there.

"What a sitting target for a submarine!" I said to myself. "Pray Heaven no submarine turns up here today!"

I had gone out to the bare northern headland, and was heading home again for tea, when I happened to see on the road a small knot of these bluejackets just parting from a couple of countrymen. This pair turned towards me, and in a moment I recognised my acquaintances, Peter Scollay junior, and Jock. Mr Hobhouse had visited their house several times by now, and was on the most friendly terms with the family.

"Good-day, Peter!" he cried as he passed them. "Have you been taking your brother to look at the ship?"

For some reason Peter stared at him in an odd way, and Jock burst into one of his loudest laughs. Peter seemed to mumble something which Mr Hobhouse failed to catch, and then, when they had passed, he could see him laughing too.

To be laughed at without knowing the reason why is always irritating, even to one of Mr Hobhouse's exceptionally amiable temperament, and it had the effect of suddenly sharpening his critical faculties. A thing struck him that had never happened to strike him

before. What was that great, strapping, Scollay fellow doing at home on a small croft, where he was quite superfluous, when his country needed every man? And why did the lout stare and then laugh? Considering what a vigilant eye was watching him behind Mr Hobhouse's glasses, it seemed to me unwise as well as rude.

In a moment I passed the bluejackets, who were distributing some purchases among their party before they set out for their ship, and I saw a possible excuse for Peter's amusement, though it seemed a poor one. The men were carrying a couple of baskets of eggs, two or three large cheeses, a parcel which probably contained butter, and one or two poultry. Presumably the pair had been selling them some of this assortment, and perhaps my suggestion that they had been merely sight-seeing struck them as humorous. It argued a poor sense of humour; still, there was one possibility.

Once more the amiable Mr Hobhouse showed his friendly spirit by addressing a few kindly words to the good fellows (that was what he called them, as being the phrase most suited to his foolish appearance), and in his artless way he was able to gather that he had been correct in supposing that Peter and Jock had been amongst their purveyors. Unfortunately he had not the foresight to inquire particularly which of the articles those two had purveyed. But I wonder very much whether any possible reader of this account, given what I knew up to this point, can honestly say that he would have put that question?

Well, I got home and sat down to high tea with Dr Rendall, and of course he began to talk of the *Uruguay's* visit. Even if nothing else had happened afterwards, such an event would have given Ransay food for several days' conversation.

"We are probably eating our last eggs and our last butter for the next week to come," he said with a laugh. "These sailors have cleared the island out, from all I can hear. They've even been to this house and got what they could, and I believe they practically cleaned out my cousin's farm."

"Really?" said Mr Hobhouse. "Really indeed? Ha, ha! Do you know, I found even the Scollays' selling them things?"

"Oh, I expect every one has been making hay while the sun shines," said he.

He had had one of his moody attacks so lately as the day before, but he had quite recovered his good humour by now, and in fact was in an extra jovial mood that evening. We sat up till about half-past ten, and then went up to our bedrooms.

I had reached the stage of pyjamas and was just opening my window for the night when the dreadful thing happened. Suddenly the whole island seemed to be illuminated. I turned my eyes instinctively to the place where the *Uruguay* lay, and there high into the

heavens mounted a blinding pillar of flame. The wind was still blowing pretty fresh away from me and towards the ship, but even against it the roar that followed shook every window and door in the house. The pillar of flame vanished the next instant, but high in the air fireballs seemed to linger for some minutes; and then the pillar of smoke rose up. It rose and rose, swift and gigantic, growing all the while greater and more terrible in girth, till at last when it was some hundreds of feet high it slowly stretched out at the top until it looked like some huge evil tree seen in a nightmare.

And there I stood at the window and stared; and there on the spot where H.M.S. *Uruguay* with her crew of hundreds and all her complement of officers (largely R.N.R. and R.N.V.R. men like myself) had lain, stood that gigantic pillar of smoke. Then all at once I realised that everything living in that ship and most of her inanimate self was represented now only by that foul column.

I heard the doctor's door open and his voice say—

"Mr Hobhouse! Hobhouse!"

I had presence of mind to clap my glasses hurriedly on my nose before I rushed into the passage.

"What has happened? Is that the ship gone, do you think?" he asked in a low voice.

I noticed that he seemed a man with a good control over his feelings. I had mine, too, pretty well in hand, but to play the absurd Thomas Hobhouse at such a moment was more than I cared to do. I preferred to show a little of what I felt, and get away from him on that excuse. So I stammered something, and then we looked at one another for a moment, and I hurriedly went back to my room.

IX. BOLTON ON THE TRACK.

"Only one survivor."

The doctor looked into my room about eight o'clock next morning to give me this brief bulletin. At breakfast he told me he had been out most of the night, but there had only been that single case for him. A boat from the island had picked a solitary living seaman out of the scum of oil, blackened by it like a negro and without a stitch of clothing. Some of the dead had been found, but not in a condition to be discussed, and of course many fragments of debris; and now a number of patrol boats were on the scene, he had handed over his patient to a naval doctor, and that was all the news of the tragedy up till eight o'clock.

I knew that John Whiteclett would certainly be in one of the patrol boats, and I spent the morning in looking out for him. Thus by an apparent accident, when the Commander did land about noon, he very soon walked into Mr Hobhouse. My cousin's face was grave and

set, and there being no witnesses, neither of us luckily had to act.

"Well, Jack?" I said.

"Did you see it happen?" he demanded.

"I happened to be at my window."

"Tell me what you saw," said he.

I told him, and he nodded at intervals.

"Just what a couple of other witnesses have told me," he said.

"Submarine?" I asked.

He shook his head.

"The odds against a torpedo sending a ship straight up like that are enormous. And one would have heard two explosions — which nobody did. Besides, the one man who was picked up has luckily been able to talk a little already. I am certain there was no torpedo attack."

"She simply blew up, then?"

"That was it."

"Accident or design?"

"God knows! Perhaps no one else ever will. It may have merely been the ammunition. As you know, that has happened before now. But it's a very curious coincidence that it should have happened off Ransay, knowing what we know. I hear a lot of the men were ashore buying things. I wonder what they brought aboard with them!"

"I can tell you what one lot brought — eggs, poultry, cheeses, and a large parcel in newspaper, which I took to be butter. But that was only one party I happened to see. They were all over the island."

He thought in silence for a few moments, and then he glanced at his watch.

"Look here, old chap," he said, "I'm afraid I must be getting off again now. Walk back with me as far as it's safe, and I'll tell you something that you must know. We can discuss the evidence later, when a little more has been collected. The point that concerns you is that Bolton has been sent for again."

"The devil he has! Do I retire, then?"

"Not at all. You see, nobody in these parts is in the Hobhouse secret, so they sent for Bolton at once to make his own kind of inquiries while we make ours. You, of course, go on making yours in your own way just the same. All the same, I think it would be tactful to stand aside—with your eyes open, of course — while Bolton is on the job."

"Tactful," I agreed, "but a little annoying."

"Well, Roger, it can't be helped, I'm afraid. I'm not the boss here, and the man is on his way now as fast as he can travel. And now, what about telling him who you really are? I've been thinking it over, and if you are agreeable I think I ought to."

I saw that this meant that he had decided he was going to, so I merely said—

"If you think it best, certainly tell him. Only swear him to secrecy."

"Certainly. And I'm sure the man himself will see the point in that. But, you see,

if I didn't tell him who you really were, he'd very likely put you down as a suspicious character and recommend your removal."

"You're quite right," I agreed.

"Besides, what you know may help him, and it would be a dog-in-the-manger kind of game to keep back anything, now that he has taken up the business."

"Right again. Well, I'll keep my nose out of the business till Bolton has had his innings."

"Good man!" said Jack. "Well, we'd better separate now. Good luck to you both!"

I trust I am not of an unduly jealous disposition, but being thus asked to take a back seat just as something really definite had happened was a strain on my philosophy. The tragedy of the *Uruguay* might not have anything to do with the secret agency in the island — though I felt in my bones it had—and Mr Bolton might come and go and leave me possibly with a little information to help my own quest. Still, it was annoying.

At the same time, my cousin's arguments were absolutely sound, and I saw perfectly that it would have been both foolish and ungenerous to play Hobhouse with the man. So I went back and picked up a novel and tried to dismiss the whole business from my mind in the meantime.

For the next twenty-four hours the island was full of gruesome stories and the wildest rumours, but for most of the time Mr Hobhouse stayed at home and finished his novel. It was on the evening of the day after the tragedy, when the doctor and he were sitting over the smoking-room fire, lighting their pipes after tea, that the bell rang.

"Hallo, who's that at this hour?" said the doctor.

I heard a heavy footstep in the passage, and guessed, but the only announcement was that a gentleman wished to see Dr Rendall. He was out of the room for a long time, nearly an hour by the clock, and when he came back his manner was serious and a little apologetic.

"I'm sorry to disturb you, Mr Hobhouse," said he, "and I assure you there is nothing to worry about, but the fact is a detective is here and wants to have a word with you."

"A detective!" exclaimed Mr Hobhouse nervously. "You don't say so? Dear me, what can he want me for!"

"He's a man Bolton," said the doctor, "the very man who came up about six months ago under the name of Thompson and gave himself out as a cattle-dealer. By Jove, I can see now what he came for! But anyhow it's about the *Uruguay* business this time, and he is interviewing everybody, and, if you don't mind, he'd like a few words with you."

I went into the dining-room and saw for the first time my

rival. He was a big, sturdy, red-faced man, with a plain bluff manner, an ideal dealer; but his eyes were shrewd and keen. In fact, once I had looked into them I put him down as a better man than I had fancied. We exchanged a conventional word on either side, and then both of us instinctively glanced at the door.

"Better speak quietly, Mr Merton," said he.

I nodded, and said with a smile—

"So you are not here as a dealer this time, Mr Bolton?"

"No," said he, "I want to get straight to business, and there's too much humbug and waste of time if one has to talk cattle for half an hour first. Besides, after what has just happened they'd be quite sharp enough here to tumble to the game. Anyhow, the people I want to get at would be, and there's no point in humbugging the others."

"Well," I said, "you know what I'm here for, and though I'm sorry to say I haven't been able to pick up much so far, anything I have picked up is at your service."

"Much obliged, Mr Merton," said he. "We're like a couple of terriers after the same rat, and as long as we get him that's all that matters. You've had your go, and now I'm going to have a little go."

He laughed genially, but it was clear enough that when he said two terriers, he meant one terrier at a time, and I accepted the situation frankly.

"Right you are," I said; "I'll take a breather while you go in and finish him off. Only, of course, if you want me to lend a hand, here I am, with nothing else to do."

He seemed distinctly relieved by this declaration and grew more friendly than ever.

"Well, now to come to business," he said. "I must tell you frankly in the first place, Mr Merton, that there were some things in your story last time you were here that I didn't know just how much to believe in. The most truthful people sometimes imagine the queerest things. If you'd had my experience, Mr Merton, you'd feel just the same about a tale like yours. But now I know you and know what's been happening here, and particularly what's happened yesterday, it's a different story. Do you mind just telling me in your own words about what you saw last time and anything you've noticed this trip?"

My opinion of Mr Bolton's shrewdness continued to rise as I noticed his close attention to my tale, and how much to the point his questions were. Every now and then he stopped me while he made a jotting in a fat, little brown-leather pocket-book, and at the end he observed—

"Well, Mr Merton, it's a queer case, but I dare say I may be able to throw a bit of light on things before I've done."

I wondered very much, and from the look on his face I do not believe for a moment that he saw a single blink of light at that time.

"And now," said he, "com-

ing to this explosion, I don't want to hear anything more about the flames and smoke and such like. All that is for the Navy people. It doesn't come under the head of my department, Mr Merton; but this buying of stuff ashore and taking parcels aboard the ship —that does come under it. In fact that's what I'm up here to investigate, for it's pretty clear, even to a man like me that knows nothing of ships, that any one on this island couldn't swim out and hold a match to a ship o' war and blow her up that way! If it *was* done from here, it must have been by one of those parcels."

"Obviously," I agreed. "And I also agree that it's for the experts to decide whether a bomb could be slipped into a paper parcel of butter, or a large cheese, or anything else they bought — and for you simply to find out exactly what was bought and who sold it."

"A paper parcel of butter and a large cheese," he repeated. "Did you happen to see any of those things being sold yourself?"

"I happened to pass some bluejackets who had just bought them."

He made me tell him exactly the circumstances of my seeing the men and my passing Peter and Jock previously—precisely, in fact, as I have told it in this account. He thought for a few moments in silence after I had finished, and then asked me if I knew definitely of any other people who had sold anything to the sailors.

"I happen to know for certain of Dr Rendall and his cousin, Mr Philip Rendall—or rather Mr Philip Rendall's farmer; but from all I saw and all I heard I fancy the difficulty will be to find a house that did not sell something."

He nodded thoughtfully.

"That's exactly the difficulty," he said, and then he rose and held out his hand. "Good-night, Mr Merton, I'm much obliged to you, and I'll promise you to make an excuse for looking you up very soon again and letting you know how I am getting on. By the way, you had better tell the doctor I was much interested in your account of how the explosion happened. That will account for my calling again."

"I must have detective instincts myself," I smiled. "I had already thought of the same lie."

In fact it came in very handy no later than Mr Bolton's departure that night. The doctor wondered very much what the detective had to say to his patient that took him so long to tell, and his curiosity was satisfied as per arrangement.

X. WHERE THE CLUE LED.

I saw nothing of Bolton next day, nor as a matter of fact did I expect to. Indeed, when he called for me on the morning after, it was a good deal sooner than I had counted on. The doctor was out, so no fable was necessary, and I took him into

the smoking-room and offered him an easy-chair.

"Well, Mr Bolton, any news?" I inquired.

He remained standing, and shook his head at the chair.

"I've no time to sit down," he said, "but I thought I'd just look in as I passed."

There was a note in his voice that made me look at him sharply.

"Have you discovered anything?" I asked.

He nodded his head slowly.

"Not very much, Mr Merton, but something."

Yet there seemed to be a hint of jubilation in his eye.

"Won't you tell the other terrier?"

His face relaxed a little, and for a moment I half thought he was going to confide in me, and then he said—

"It's a little too soon to say much. But I'm on the track of something, I don't mind admitting—something pretty surprising too, if it's the right track. Possibly I may be able to tell you more to-night. Could you come out this evening with me if I needed you?"

"Rather!"

"Well," he said, moving towards the door, "any time after dark I may look in—if this leads to anything."

"Even if it doesn't, look in and put me out of suspense, like a good fellow 'too,' Mr Bolton."

He smiled again. Evidently he was decidedly pleased with himself this morning.

"All right, Mr Merton. I'll do that much for you."

Just before I opened the door for him I had one last shot.

"Won't you even give me a hint, Mr Bolton?"

He looked at me for a moment, and then said in a low voice (for we were near the door)—

"There's some one in this island who hasn't lived in it all their life—not by any means. I've found that out."

He nodded significantly at me, but his lips closed tight again, and I saw there was no more to be got out of him, so I wished him luck and returned to my chair to think.

Whether excitement at the prospect of actually reaching the crisis of this adventure that very night, or chagrin at seeing the problem which had eluded me solved straight off by this great drover of a fellow was my uppermost feeling, I should be afraid to say. I know both were strongly mingled, and for a few minutes it never even occurred to me to question whether the man really was within sight of a solution. And then I began to wonder.

Who was this mysterious person who had not lived all "their" life on the island? He had concealed, probably deliberately, "their" sex. And was it then a fact of which I myself was unaware? Bolton said he had found it out. But it might be no news to me. I thought of several people, a woman and at least two men, who had certainly lived a considerable part of their lives out of the island. But there was no use speculating with the test so near at hand.

All the same, I felt so restless that I should have gone out to

walk it off there and then had it not been for the fear that I might chance to follow in Bolton's tracks and lead him to think I was doing it deliberately. At all costs I wanted him to see that I was playing the game (as I was playing it), so I waited till after our early dinner and then set off.

I well remember the day, a nasty raw specimen of March weather, not exactly raining, but trying to all the time, and altogether grey and dismal. The spring ploughing was proceeding apace, and, as the fields grew brown, there was less and less trace of colour left in the landscape. In fact it was a day when something evil could scarcely help happening, or at least it seems so looking back.

I walked briskly to keep the chill out, following the winding road, but so wrapt in my thoughts that I hardly noticed where I was going till I found myself passing from the metalled highway on to the rough track that led one beyond the last of the farms out to the desolate stretch of country at the nor'-west end of the island. At both sides, and especially on the north, the rocks rose here till they became genuine cliffs, not very high, but rugged and broken, with little hollows dipping down through them here and there, and giving scrambling access to small coves. I kept along near this northern cliff line, still thinking all the while, until with a start and a quickening of my heart I became abruptly conscious of a figure fifty yards or so ahead.

I had a sudden dim recollection; he seemed disturbingly familiar, and then in a moment I recognised Jock, though why the sight of Jock should rouse a disturbing thought was more than I could say. When I saw him he was close to one of those little dips, but whether he had been down at the shore or not I could not say, for up to that instant I had been quite inattentive. But in any case Jock was such a chronic, aimless wanderer that his appearance anywhere never surprised his acquaintances.

Evidently he recognised the harmless, eccentric Mr Hobhouse quickly enough, for he broke into a shambling trot and came towards me with an unusual air of eagerness.

"Stones!" he cried as he came up to me. "Jock knows stones!"

"Stones?" said I genially. "Dear me, Jock, this is great news. Are these the stones?" and I pointed to the rocks all about us.

"Stones here!" cried Jock, pointing eagerly across towards the other side of the promontory, and catching me by the arm in a friendly way.

I had never seen the creature so excited before, and for a moment could make neither head nor tail of it. And then I remembered. On my last visit to the knoll near the Scollays', Jock had been watching me, and by way of playing my part thoroughly I had affected a vast interest in certain large slabs of stone showing here and there through the grass. Looking at stones was the last thing I was keen about

this afternoon, but there was simply no resisting Jock. With the air of a pleased child he led me in the way he wished me to go, only letting go my arm when he saw I really meant to inspect his stones.

"This is an unusual exhibition for Jock," I thought, but in the character of Mr Hobhouse there was nothing for it but pretending high gratification and going where he led me.

The promontory was about a third of a mile across at this point, and when we had made this journey my intelligent guide triumphantly pointed out a few ordinary boulders at the end of it. They were large, it is true, but there their merits ended. However, I examined them with every appearance of pleasure, thanked Jock effusively and even gave him a sixpence, and at last bade him good-day and started for home.

It had been a queer little episode, and had I been in my usual clue-hunting humour I should no doubt have dissected it carefully—and then abused myself for being a fanciful fool. But this afternoon I had too much else to think of, and the incident passed out of my mind in the meantime.

At tea I prepared the doctor for the possibility of my going out at night by a long-winded, babbling, and entirely fictitious account of Bolton's morning call, from which it appeared that Mr Bolton was so interested in Mr Hobhouse's account of how he saw the ship blow up that he would probably call in the evening to verify certain particulars, and might even want Mr Hobhouse to come with him to the house where he was lodging. And then after tea I smoked and read and waited.

Darkness was beginning to fall when we finished tea that night, and the lamps were lit when we went into the smoking-room. At any moment the summons might come, and yet eight o'clock struck, and nine, and ten, and I even induced the doctor to sit up till after eleven, but still there was no sign of Bolton. And then at last I said some severe things to myself about the man, and we went to bed.

Next morning was equally chilly and dismal, and after the doctor went out to visit a case, I sat over the fire, resolved to stay there till Mr Bolton came and explained himself. I stayed there all morning, but he never came, and no more did Dr Rendall. Our dinner hour approached and passed, and at last I sat down and had my meal alone. I had just finished when I heard the front door open sharply and the doctor's step in the passage. It struck me instantly as curiously quick for him. He entered the dining-room, and I saw at once that something was very much the matter.

"Bolton has been murdered," he said abruptly. "His body has just been found in the sea."

(To be concluded.)

WITH THE AMERICAN TROOP CONVOY.

THE pilots have been dropped, the lightship is out of sight astern, and gradually the sky-scrapers of New York dip one by one below the horizon. Just a yellow rim of land is still visible to the north, as the great convoy forms up on its guide. Everything has been thought out beforehand—each ship knows her appointed place, her speed and course, so that little signalling is necessary. This is just as well, for the weather has changed, and as the great concourse of ships sweeps forward with increasing speed, the first heavy clap of thunder crashes out, and in a few moments the torrential rains have blotted out all but the nearest vessels. Crash follows crash, flash succeeds flash for thirty-six hours, while the rain continues to fall almost without intermission. At night the darkness is intense, except when the jagged lightning illumines the convoy, and shows labouring ships and white foam-tossed waters. It is good weather for making a departure, and baffles the submarines. For days the latter have been harrowing the New Orleans coast to the southward, and in the morning we hear a "U"-boat has been sighted to the north of us: we have passed each other in the storm, and this particular Fritz at least will not be able to overtake or trouble us.

But the duties of Commodore of a convoy, especially a troop one, are always anxious, though intensely interesting work.

There are a thousand other perils besides the constant one of submarines. He has, perhaps, under his charge 40,000 human souls, with from 10 to 20 great vessels verging upon 600 feet long, and carrying, in addition to troops, hundreds of thousands of tons of the most valuable cargo and foodstuffs. The front of quite a small convoy will spread over several miles of sea, and if ships do not keep perfect station and well closed up, the convoy will also be several miles in depth. All this great concourse has to manœuvre as one ship, to zigzag together, to go at the same speed. With ships so close, the slightest mistake on the part of some junior and inexperienced officer may well bring two floating masses of metal weighing together 40,000 tons crashing into each other. Things work *so* smoothly, safe navigation *looks* so easy, when properly performed, that the landsman is quite unable to realise that there is any danger at all. But just one little mistake, and there comes a blinding crash, and in a few moments two great ships will be settling beneath the waves, bearing with them their crushed human freights. In the early summer months, in that part of the Atlantic where the cold Lab-

rador Current and the warm Gulf Stream meet, fogs are prevalent. Fog alone is of itself a danger, with a score or more great vessels driving blindly through it in company; and in war-time speed cannot be reduced, however thick the cloud-blanket. But there is a greater peril than the fog, for somewhere about there are thousands of tons of floating ice. May, June, and July are the perilous months when the great bergs come hustling along the Labrador coast, and thence move out into the Atlantic, sometimes reaching as far east as to be within sight of the Azores before they finally melt in the warmer waters. Since the day when the *Titanic* went down, shore-going humanity has gradually been forgetting this peril among the greater horrors of war: but it exists, and it always *must* exist on the west side of the Atlantic, when the first summer sunshine breaks up the iron-bound, frozen waters of the North, and the cold current which sets down the coast bears the ice-packs to the southward, often at the rate of four miles an hour. They are so vast that they are constantly seen aground in sixty fathoms (360 feet) of water. Even if your ship is stopped until the fog lifts, she is not safe against them; for the cold current often runs under and across the warm one, and these monsters are so deep they can come sailing along against a gale and the run of surface water. The general limits of the ice at various times of the year is well known, but there is never any certainty about its exact position. Some captains have sailed the Atlantic for forty years without ever seeing a berg — others have crashed blindly into one on their first voyage. Is it strange that sailors are sometimes fatalistic? But picture a convoy running into dense fog in these waters, and realise that the Commodore's work is not without anxiety.

But at last the Western zone of fogs and possible ice is past, and we are sailing along with a fresh following westerly wind, with blue skies and bluer seas. The Gulf Stream is still under our keels however, adding perhaps thirty miles to each day's run, but with gradually diminishing velocity. The water is warm, somewhere above the seventies, and innumerable is the marine life disporting itself in it. Undersea life, whether natural or of the artificial German type, bears an uncanny resemblance all the world over. A porpoise, — dashing straight headlong at the ship,—smacks unpleasantly of a torpedo; while the rising black-fish, blowing as she tops a wave, makes the heart miss a beat until further inspection has assured the startled faculties that the monster is a fleshy and not a tin submarine.

The troops, who have hitherto sprawled lengthwise on the decks, like kelp at low water, now rouse themselves from the torpor of "mal-de-mer," and

light a tentative cigarette. The Y.M.C.A. young man arises from the depths of a darkened cabin and commences to inaugurate sports, which are taken up so eagerly, and with such ferocity of fear-provoking college yells and American cat-calls, that we pray for bad weather again. A Special Thanksgiving service is suggested, but on a hint from the Captain that the convoy has not yet even entered the real danger zone, it is deferred until a later date not yet decided upon. And so we pass along the mid-Atlantic, while the temperature gradually falls, the more nearly we approach the British Isles. For three days the convoy is once more enveloped in fog. Each ship hangs out a fog-buoy astern, which she tows at a distance of about a cable (200 yards). This shows as a white wave on the surface of the water, and enables the following ship to keep in touch, when her next ahead is shut out by the fog. The moon is at the full, and it is light all night, as the silent convoy speeds through the spectral mists. Thousands of beings are all around you, yet nothing is visible; it is as still as the grave save for the churning screws and the beating of the waves. Suddenly the look-outs report "fog-buoy right ahead." Its white wave is clearly visible as we gradually overtake it, until it is abreast the bridge, only thirty or forty yards distant. We must be right on top of another ship! The syren is sounded loudly, and the electric navigation lights blink through the white fog as the master-switch is put on. But the white wave turns and shears off to starboard; it is gone! But stay! *Is* it a fog-buoy? There *is* no ship ahead of us, for we are the leading ship and in the centre of the line, and our companions on either beam are now just looming up in the ghostly moon-lit fog. Then there is only *one* thing it can be—a "U"-boat. A "U"-boat whom we have overtaken in the fog, proceeding on the surface awash, and who dived for dear life, and with precious little hope of life, when we sounded the syren and put on our lights. Needles are found in haystacks, I presume, for that would be a less extraordinary chance than that which has happened to us—for the centre of a convoy to pass within thirty yards of a "U"-boat in a dense fog in mid-Atlantic. But so it is, and had we given but one touch to our helm with knowledge—there would have been one "Fritz" less to trouble civilisation.

Grey seas and a leaden sky, where the wind comes tearing from the N.W. We are hundreds of miles from land, but a score of telescopes anxiously search the horizon in every direction, and presently a little, heaving, grey dot is visible on the starboard bow. A minute more and a dozen are visible along the eastern horizon: it is the escort flotilla spread to intercept us. A few minutes, and they are spread along our flanks and ahead and

astern of us, like bees buzzing round a comb. The gale which has favoured us has been in their teeth, and they have had a sad tossing; they are nothing loath to turn and run with us before it. We are in the real danger zone now, and it gives us a strong feeling of satisfaction to see those little grey lances of destroyers, tossing in perpetual motion, on every hand. If a ship is torpedoed now, we at least have the comfort of knowing that the submarine will have a hot time of it, and that, if our ship sinks, we shall not be left to drown or starve unaided on the ocean. Before we met the destroyer escort we knew that might be our fate—for the convoy would have gone on like a herd of hunted buffaloes, leaving the wounded ship to the mercy of the hunter. Big ships may never stop to assist other torpedoed big ships, lest they themselves also become a victim. A British seaman must still all the dictates of humanity which impel him to help his sinking friend. The British Navy learned that lesson once for all in the early days of the war, when the three cruisers, *Cressy*, *Hogue*, and *Aboukir*, fell victims in one short half-hour to a single submarine.

And so the big convoy moves on, zigzagging always while there is a gleam of light. The green mountains of Ireland are sighted and passed, the narrower waters of the Irish Sea are threaded, but the tension never for a second relaxes, for the nearer our destination, the greater the peril; and now the danger of mines is added to that of the nimble torpedo. Small silvery dirigibles come sailing out to meet us. Seaplanes and aircraft of all sorts come darting from behind projecting headlands: they hover awhile ahead of the convoy, then disappear once more into the fathomless distance. Last but not least, that most useful of nautical spies, the kite-balloon, precedes us, towed by its fast-moving patrol craft, to which it is attached by a wellnigh invisible gossamer thread.

But the last zigzag is done—the convoy uncoils and straightens out, the pilots are got aboard, and we are steaming the last few miles, which a cloud of smoking trawlers have just seen swept clean of mines, and now roll their ungainly way up the muddy estuary. The factory chimneys and the smoke of a great town are near. To-night we shall sleep in peace: sleep none the less profound for perils past, and the fact that for the last three days and nights no captain has left his bridge. Now is the time for our Y.M.C.A. young man to give his "Thanksgiving" service; but—alas for the frailty of human nature!—our Yankee friends can think now of nothing more spiritual than the sights of London town! There let us leave them, imbibing the intangible charm of "Blighty," of that old country which seems to them to be as much their home as ours, and which is calling to them from the back of a thousand years.

RUPERT STANLEY.

A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PACIFIST.

I.

IMAGINE to yourself a thick quarto volume—plump if not clumsy, and filling the palm of the hand, bound as if for the use of posterity in the toughest of leather, and the pages covered with writing in a trim Chancery hand. There you have in a glance the book of Justinian Pagitt's works and days wherein he wrote many odd things "for the ease of his memory," and without knowing it for the entertainment of our own.

He was born in or about the year 1610 at the village of Tottenham, being the eldest son of James Pagitt, "whome," to use the words graven on his tomb, "his owne worth and Prince's favour lighted to the dignity of a Baron of His Majesty's Exchequer, in whome birth, merit, place made up the body of unblemished honour. He was the prudent husband of three wives, by the first the provident father of four sons, a secure master of himself and a sincere servant of God. His life was a well acted story of himselfe. His death a willing passage to Glorie. He died in the years of nature 57; Grace 1638."

This good man belonged to the branch of the Pagitt family which for some two centuries had been settled at Cranford and Barton Seagrave in the county of Northampton,—a quiet race of men whose ambitions in life were satisfied as it seems with the begetting of male children and with the sending of the eldest with unfailing monotony to the law *vid* Christ Church and the Middle Temple, and the youngest through Magdalen to the cure of souls. Justinian, therefore, by the very choice of his name, by the custom of his house, and by the fact that his father was a judge and his mother a daughter of the Dean of the Arches, had but little choice in the destination of his life; born *in gremio legis*, he was devoted from the outset to the dusty purlieus of the law.

II.

Of his infancy and earlier youth the manuscript gives no account; we enjoy life too well at that age to burden it with notes. The beginning is at Christ Church, and even here the material is thin. There are some pages of scholastic notes and memoranda of lectures heard which testify to his application—and one may guess from his after life that he was sober and painstaking to an unpopular degree. He never figures in a college fray. For his sole recreation he seems to have walked over to Magdalen Hall to hear Dr Henshaw

preach, and then, returning to his rooms, to have bolted the door and written the sermon down. Perhaps he was a little unfortunate in following two kinsmen of very brilliant parts. The fame of Ephraim Pagitt was still fresh in the college memory, who while a student was able to speak in fifteen different tongues, and by his eleventh year had already translated and published Lavater's 'Sermons upon Ruth.' And there were some hoary-headed dons who could recall the angelic wisdom and grace of Eusebius Pagitt, his uncle, whose discourses in high philosophy earned him the name of "the golden sophister." It was a little trying for Justinian to be reminded of these two. A plodder can scarcely hope to vie with supermen.

If college life proved uncongenial, he found some comfort, I think, and some outlet for his natural piety in the acquaintance of Dr Richard Corbett, successively student and Dean of Christ Church, and at that time Bishop of Oxford. One almost wonders at their knowing each other, for the Bishop, according to contemporary accounts, was "the delight of all ingenious men, and the most celebrated wit in the university." In his youth he had been the convivial friend of Ben Jonson, and boasted of having revelled and versified in all the taverns of London. It is doubtful if he ever emerged from his youth, for after becoming a doctor of divinity he donned a leather jerkin and sang ballads at Abingdon Cross. Nor did the cares of a diocese depress him. Aubrey says that after service in the Cathedral "he would sometimes take the key of his wine cellar, and he and his chaplain, Washington, would go and look themselves in and be merry. Then first he layes down his episcopal hat, There layes the doctor. Then he puts off the gowne — There lyes the bishop. Then 'twas Here's to thee Corbett and Here's to thee Washington."

I wonder if the puritanical Pagitt knew of all this as he sat in the bishop's house adjoining the Folly bridge? Probably not, for they had quieter things in common. The bishop was a poet — the best, as some one has said, of all the bishops of England —and Justinian too was possessed of a juvenile muse. On one page of this book he has copied out some exquisitely tender lines composed by Corbett for the third birthday of Vincent, his only son:—

"What I shall leave thee none can tell,
Yet all shall say I wish thee well.
I wish thee, Vin, before all wealth
Both bodily and goastly health;
Not too much meanes nor witt come to thee,
Too much of either may undo thee.
I wish thee learninge not for showe
But truly to instruct and knowe:
Not such as Gentlemen require
To prate at table or at fier;
I wish thee all thy mother's graces,
Thy father's fortune and his places;
I wish thee friends and one at Court
Not to build on, but to support;
Not to helpe thee in doing many
Oppressions but from suffering any.
I wish thee peace in all thy wayes,
Not lazy, not contentious dayes,
And when thy soule and body parte
As innocent as now thou arte."

Even the magic of these verses could not avail, for only one of these good wishes did Vincent bring to pass. "A very handsome youth," says Aubrey, "but he is run out of all and goes begging up and down to gentlemen in the streets."

The rest is silence.

III.

In the year 1628 Pagitt went down from Oxford without taking his degree. With all their learning, the "golden sophister" and the polyglottist had done the same. It was another custom of their family. He seems to have returned to his father's house at Tottenham High Cross, and to have read there for the Bar. He becomes more earnest than ever. It was naturally the time for making great resolutions, for framing syllabuses of mental development and rules of social demeanour. The notebook grows more intimate, serving almost the use of a confessional. Into tiny one-inch squares he crams the doings and misdoings of each day, using for the purpose a curious abbreviated jargon of English and Latin, or whichever will squeeze best into the space—as, for example, "Meditatio de Lawyer's Life et Officer's deut: Preces et lectio biblica: Walke in fieldes: In confabulation cum amicis: Too much bookishnesse: Somnolentia peccavi." Sometimes one has just a glimpse of the outer world. There are three pages of interesting notes upon the Duke of Buckingham's assassination (1628),[1] a sentence or two doubting the king's wisdom in making Laud Primate of all England (1633), and an account of two vacations (1630 and 1632) spent in the cathedral of Winchester and along the lanes of Warwickshire. But in the main he is hopelessly introspective and quite oblivious of the shadows creeping over the face of England.

Some more elaborate entries of the time, carefully tabulated, under the heading *Examen Salutis Meae*, make the quaintest reading:—

1. "I do often eate too much at suppers which makes me ill and drowsie the next morning.
2. I do not carry myself with so much circumspecion as I should do but am too familiar with Sophie which may diminish my self respect.
3. I *must* forbear to contradict my father with my tongue. I must not meddel with his janglings with the servants.

[1] After Felton had assassinated the Duke of Buckingham, his name was anagrammatised thus: "John Felton. No; flie not." Pagitt takes a careful note of this.

4. I have spoaken irreverently concerning the Ministers of God and indifferently censured them and their sermons. I have been weary and drowsy at sermons many times minding and earnestly desiring humain witt in them than endeavouring to reape a spirituall benefit from the heavenly doctrines.
5. I have much doubted concerning heaven and hell 1633 26 Novembris.
6. I have been inclined to pompous and stately musick in churches and have derided them that spoaken against it.
7. I lay a bed musing till 9 o'clock which caused a dulness in my head with losse of so much time. *Resolve* that wakening at 5 o'clock I will knock with my bedstaff to waken Elias who shall presently rise and make a fire whilst I rubb my body and then I will presently skip out of bed." A note in the margin adds, "I must have ye tinder-box with me."
8. Query is not playing on the viol immediately after meales hurtfull by reason that it stirres ye fancy and bringeth a grate [*i.e.*, flush] into my face.
9. Resolve to skip-rope each morning at six o'clock.
10. *De arte saltandi.* I must study not to daunce loftily so much as to carry ye body sweetly and smoothly away with a graceful conportment. In some places hanging steps are very graceful and give much ease and time to breathe.[1]
11. I am too grave at cards to play with women. Ergo I must winke at escapes," &c. &c.

That is just what he could not do. I doubt if Justinian winked or was even whimsically inclined in all his life. These heart-searchings and struggles for self-perfection throw indirectly a shrewd light upon the oddity of his nature. Was ever man so ineradically grave? With women especially he was as unbending as an Anabaptist—and that to them, as he learned, is the unpardonable sin. Not finding any logical reason for their existence or their peculiarities, his natural instinct as a lawyer was to mistrust them one and all. And soon an event came to pass which increased his suspicions tenfold, and distracted him sadly from following the Golden Rule. In brief, the old man, his father, Baron Pagitt, took it into his head to marry again — for the third time. At his age such a step seemed rather uncalled for, and was hardly redeemed by the symmetrical propriety of his choice — the lady Mazaretta

[1] In the reign of James I. barristers were put out of commons for the offence of neglecting to dance before the judges; nor will this appear so very extraordinary when it is recollected that the very judges themselves were accustomed to dance at the antique masques and revels of their respective Inns

having previously had two husbands, as he had had two wives. The match really was not so equal as it looked, for age was in her favour, and her tongue had slain two husbands, and could slay a hundred more. Moreover, she was the daughter of a lawyer, and had three hedgehogs on her coat of arms. There was no question here of the survival of the fittest.

Now Justinian, as the eldest son by the first wife, was naturally furious. He was persuaded that this creature had set her cap at his father—that she coveted not his affection but his fortune. To his jaundiced eyes every change she made in the household was but further evidence of this. At the same time he had not the courage to accuse her before his father. The position was a delicate one, and he was always timid. So he went on accumulating the evidence in his book of remembrance, and relieved his feelings in that way.

IV.

Here are some of the entries under the headings, "*Audita et Animadversiones de Matre med:* Oeconommical Affaires: The chief complaints against my mother:—

1. "We often have rotten lamb, bad beefe of 16d a stone and tuff mutton at 4/- a quarter.
2. The joynts being small she causes them to be but halfe roasted which cannot be so wholsome for my father.
3. She repines wheneas any of my ffathers ffriends come to meales, *e.g.* my sister coming once at 1 o'clock she sayd: 'I hoape she is not comme to dinner.'
4. She causes my father's shirts to be washt in the bucket but her owne smocks are washt by ye hand.
5. She allowes my father nothing to his breakfaste but loathsome mingled butter.
6. She causes ye maide to fetch butter by penniworths at ye chandlers which our neighbours jeere at to my father's disgrace.
7. She is basely sparing of pepper and mustard scarcely allowing any.
8. She so imployes the maydes in making her petticoats that they cannot mende my linen.
9. She buyeth stale breade, saying we eate it up apace when new. This Joyce told me.
10. This day at dinner my mother told my father that ye dinner cost three shillings. But ye cookmaid after dinner told my brother, that though she did laye out 3s this day at market, halfe ye fishe, halfe ye eggs, a quart of vinegar, a quarter of ye butter and some other thinges were not sent in to dinner.

11. When Parson Holt read to us that Solomon had men-singers and women-singers she bid my father mark that and bid him remember *women-singers*. Whereby I conceive she meant that she would have Miss Woodson waite on *her* and send my father for an organist."

Nothing you see comes amiss. And though himself a lawyer he will employ hearsay evidence at third hand against his mother. Look at this!—

12. "My father told Joyce who told Elias who told me that his ruffle was now startched very charily and his linen but rarely mended by reason of the maydes' ever spinning and knitting. The cook-mayd told me likewise she could not have time from knitting to even wash the trenchers."

As if in desperation at the sight of this page of complaints, he prepares for action: "The longer she is suffered to go on in this course," he argues to himself, "the greater leade she will get, and perhaps tye my father's heade so straight under her apron-strings that it will be hereafter difficult to get him away." A moment later he begins to shrink from the task in hand. He makes another prim list of "Inconveniences which might arise if I shoulde informe my father concerning my mother's misdoings and meannesses."

1. "She would use what means she could by lying and spreading tales against me.
2. I shall not have my linen washt or mended well." Note in the margin, "This may be remedied by having my cloathes washed abroade."
3. She hath *alreadye* tied my father's hedd so straight under her strings that he would not credit my information."

V.

This sort of domestic fray could have but one conclusion, for the stepmother controlled the supplies. Justinian is discreetly silent on the ultimate encounter, but the fact of his discomfiture is clear. He does not even capitulate; he runs away. On the 21st May 1634, with his brother Thomas for companion, he takes lodgings in Battersey till Term commences, and then applies for chambers in the Middle Temple, where the name of Pagitt had been honoured many a hundred years.

On June 15, upon paying £40 to the new buildings, then in course of erection, the brothers were granted admission to "the chambers, studies and woodhouses in Elm Court, on the second floor

eastward." In the note-book Justinian has a separate heading: "How to contrive our chambers in Elm Court," and among other details there is a precise plan shewing where their respective belongings and books are to go—*e.g.*, "Places to hang gownes and dublets, a faire place to hang my robes in; A catalogue of things to be bought to furnish our new chamber," with a list of *Necessaria*, which includes, "Candlesticks, *e.g.*, Mr Coles Iron Candlestick, Bellows, fier showell, tongs, pair of globes, cushions," &c., and a list of *Necessaria Non*, which includes "a devise of greene glasse to preserve my eyes by candle light."

I fancy these glasses were purchased after all,—they would have suited him so well. For it is quite clear that in spite of his stepmother's rocks of offence the main current of his life ran on unchanged. If anything he became more pragmatical than before, declining to swerve a hand's-breadth from his habitual way without legal or ancestral precedent. He allows himself just once to be fined for "missing Mr Hatton's reading," but then his father and grandfather had done the same. Otherwise he was perfect.

In the pages entitled "*Examen diurnum vitae meae*" in his book you may observe him daily immersed in Bracton, Lyttelton, and the common law, and in sermons deeper still. Twice a week he goes to hear the preachments of Dr Michlethwaite, the Master of the Temple, and afterwards he digests them into his book. It is to be hoped he took some profit from them, for the learned Doctor complained of getting none. In the Temple records for the year 1635 you will find him demanding "recompense for his afternoon sermons and pains in the forenoons beyond his predecessors. But the bench decide that nothing is due or can be claimed in respect of supernumerary sermons."

About this time Pagitt seems to have made the acquaintance of another Justinian Pagitt, minister of the English congregation at Amsterdam. This gentleman being much exercised about Church discipline, sends twenty propositions for the consideration of Thomas Hooker of Esher, who was then said to be "the oracle and expediall library of the younger clergy." Some of the propositions are referred to in our manuscript—*e.g.*, "Whether it is lawfull for any to resort unto the public meetings of the Brownists, and to communicate with them?" The answer is pat: "*Negative.* Sinful and utterly unlawful."

VI.

Reading Pagitt's journal, you would hardly believe that the Middle Temple was one of the wildest communities then existing. What a pity he was too decorous to take a part or

even to tell us what he must have seen or heard. As it is, we are left to the statutes of the Inn, where, in sententious terms, the students' offences are recited and penalties enacted. In Pagitt's first year it becomes necessary to provide "that no gentleman shall come into the hall or place of public prayer with hats, cloaks, boots, spurs, swords or daggers, or shall wear long hair." A catalogue is made of those "chief stirrers of mutiny" who had resolved to continue these practices; but, as you may guess, Justinian's name is not to be looked for there. The following year it is decreed that no dicing shall be used in time of divine service; that no one shall presume to take violently from the steward, butler, cook, or any other servant, any wine, tobacco, or provisions, or to hinder and interrupt the service of the house. Moreover, the gate in Essex Court leading towards the tavern shall be barred up till further order. Of individual misdemeanours there is no end. It is recorded, to the prejudice of one Richard Devey, that a young woman came to his door and delivered a bastard child, whereupon Richard ran away, and was not heard of again, and the aged Masters, to save the reputation of the Inn, were left to suckle the child.

Not long after this, Pagitt's neighbour Freeman was expelled "for calling one Wm. Peele, a student of brushes [presumably an artist], into his chambers, forcing him on pain of instant death to utter profane speeches and execrations against his will and conscience," and threatening, when it was over, "that he should be pumped and cut in pieces if he dared to complain."

These disorders, or "unsufferable enormities" as they were termed, came to a head about Christmastide in Pagitt's fourth year, and led to the following manifesto from the Bench: "Whereas the licentious expensiveness of some gentlemen excells all reasonable limits and begets clamour against the Society, and other disorders and abuses in later years have more and more crept in and have grown to such a height that the misgovernment of these times is become a public scandal whereof the judges and State take notice and press hard for reformation. Now the Masters of the Bench for vindicating the ancient honour of the Society and for removing reproach from their government have ordered that no Christmas shall be held this year within the House but that the company shall dissolve. Meanwhile every gentleman may dispose of himself at his own discretion and liberty."

A vain display of authority as the sequel shows: "For notwithstanding the order aforesaid, divers gentlemen with their swords drawn in a contemptuous and riotous manner assembled in St. Thomas' Eve, broke open by violence the doors of the hall, butlery and kitchen," and proceeded to revel and drink, and dice. An officer of the bench

who came in with a seasonable desire for peace and goodwill among men was carried out and placed in the common stocks. Where do you think was Pagitt on that night of nights? Mending his hose perhaps, or cogitating upon contingent remainders, or more likely wondering what he should do if the rioters came his way. He writes down here in the book his resolve if he be challenged to a duel, "I will reply in the words which a wise man used to the braggart Antonius, 'If Antonius have a desier to loose his life he may finde many other meanes beside this,' and another answer I could make were this, 'I will not venture an old angell to a crackt groath.'" With this resolution in his heart and with cotton-wool stuffed in his ears, this seventeenth-century pacifist continues his studies, and offers when the uproar has subsided, to serve on the standing committee appointed by the Bench "*ne quid respublica societatis detrimenti caperet.*"

VII.

This is the place perhaps to review Pagitt's correspondence or such of it as figures in his book. As one might expect, the letters are most elaborate affairs, composed with infinite pains from two-and-twenty "rules of the epistolary art," with preliminary drafts and corrections without end. But for all that they contain much interesting matter. The first is written to his cousin, James Harrington, on January 28, 1633, when he was attached to the Middle Temple but not in residence as yet. After conveying his warmest affection to "Mrs Anne," regulator of his cousin's household, who had a pleasant custom of keeping him in pastries and plum-cake, he adds: "Mr Prynne of Lincoln Inne hathe lately sett forth a booke intitled *Histrio-Mastrix, or the Player's Scourge*, the sale of which is prohibited, and he to appeare at the High Commission on Thursday next. I will if you desier it send you a more particular relacion. His booke is extraordinarily stufft with quotations of old authors which they say are his only argument.[1] It is observable that his booke was published the next day after the Queen's Pastorall at Somerset House. *P.S.*—Will you please lend me Sir Kenelm Digby's Mathematical discourses."

On Candlemas Day the same year the four Inns of Court presented a masque before the King and Queen, in order to counteract the effect of Prynne's book and confute his opinion against stage plays. One almost feels they did but

[1] Prynne boasts in his preface that he has cited no less than 55 Synods and Councils, 70 Fathers and Christian writers before 1200, 150 foreign and domestic, Protestant and Popish authors since, and 40 Heathen Philosophers.

strengthen his case—at least in so far as his charges of prodigality and waste were concerned; for they determined to make such a masque as had never been seen before and of which the like would never be seen again. They succeeded. They pleased the King. They made the Puritans rage. They staggered posterity. And this in the four hours of one night at a trifling cost of twenty-one thousand pounds.

Those who take pleasure in pageants of this kind should turn to the Memorials of Bulstrode Whitelocke of the Middle Temple, who served with Edward Hyde, later Lord Chancellor of England, Mr Attorney Noy, and the learned John Selden on the Committee of Management. In his pages, decked out with a sumptuous array of courtly words and gilded phrase, there is a noble account "of this the most glorious and splendid shew that ever was held in England." He tells of the wonderful company of lute-players, and performers on bagpipes and horns that he collected, and of the incidental music written by Lawes and the Queen's musicians from France. He describes the procession of proper and beautiful young gentlemen, of whom some walked and some rode, "borrowing the King's best horses and richest saddles," from Chancery Lane to the palace of Whitehall. Nor does he hide the inevitable jealousies of the Inns of Court, which drove them at last to throw dice for precedence, and to frame the seats of the Grand-Masquers in the form of an oval, so that none might seem to be preferred.

As one might imagine, the masque "gave great contentment, especially to those of the younger sort and of the female sex"; the queen and her ladies were enthralled. They danced with the masquers till the dawn, praised their fine dresses, and made the king order the same revels for the following night. "And so," says Whitelocke, with something like a sigh, "so are the earthly pomp and glory, if not vanity, soon past and over as if it had never been."

Unfortunately Pagitt neglects to inform us as to the part he took in the show. His appropriate place was certainly in the "Anti-Masque of Birds, wherein was represented a solemn Owl sitting in an ivy bush." But his pen is taken up with grumbling at his share of the expense, and debating anxiously the question of clothes, how and at what cost to strike the balance between magnificence and meanness. After some inquiry, he draws up a statement of "What others have in hand to weare," and decides that, while the black satin favoured by Gray's Inn is rather heavy, the cloth-of-gold dubblet devised by Mr Trevor with scarlet breeches and cloak is beyond all the bounds of modesty. "In buying things against ye maske," he adds, "I was taxed for inconstancy and unsettledness in my resolu-

tion what to buy. I bespoake roses and garters laced with gold and silver lace and afterwards had no use for them." In a letter to another cousin, Tremyll, we find some details of the show itself. "I send you," he says, "a booke of our masque [Shirley's 'Triumph of Peace'] which was presented on Monday last with much applause and commendation from ye King and Queene and all spectators. We all kist ye Queene's hand and then were conducted by my Lord Chamberlain and other Lords to a rich banquet whereto ye King and Queene came and tooke a taste and then graciously smiling upon us left us to the sole enjoying of that well furnished table. Being much taken with ye masque the King sent invitation to us to ride againe on Tuesday next to the Merchant Taylor's Hall, in ye same manner as we rode to Whitehall, to meet his Majesty to supper. Sir Harry Vane[1] and other great Travellers say they never saw such a sight in any part of the world."

VIII.

The other letters deal chiefly with cases in the courts, but are so full of scandal, and so free from legal phrasing, that a layman may enjoy them. I find from the records of the Inn that Pagitt was called to the degree of the Utter Bar in 1635, and was attached later to the northern circuit. Writing from the sessions at Harrogate to his uncle, Sir Thomas Twysden, Doctor of Laws and Chancellor of Lichfield, he says: "I heard likewise one yt went by the name of Dr Bright indicted and convicted for being married to three wives at one time. He had his clergy[2] and was burnt in the hand. There was another convict for a conspiracy who went to one Mr Tine a merchant at the Exchange and threatened to sue him in the spirituall court for having carnel knowledge of a wench whom he had instructed beforehand. Mr Tine having a handsome wife and being unwilling any such thinge should come to her eares, to avoyd jealousy gave him money to be ridd of him, but he came twice afterward for more money. Then Mr Tine being better advised indictes this fellow and he was fined £100, bound to his good behaviour, pillory and imprisonment during ye King's pleasure. Mr Recorder sayd this was now a common trick and that Mr Hooker who writt the Ecclesiasticall Polity was served in the same way."

Another letter (December 1633) refers to the case of Lord Dominic Sarsfield, Justice of

[1] He was at that time Comptroller of the King's Household.

[2] This is rather a late example of the benefit of clergy, though the privilege was not, in fact, abolished till the year 1827.

the Common Pleas of Ireland, who was tried in the Star Chamber and censured, fined, and removed for his misdemeanours to juries, witnesses, and prisoners in open court. Pagitt declares that "On one occasion when two of the Petit jury would not agree the judge sent an officer in to them to say that at another place in his circuit when one of the jury would not agree the rest pulled him by the nose and pinched him till he gave in."

The last case noted by Pagitt is one of *lèse majesté* brought in the King's Bench against a certain Chrogoggen, of whom "it was testified by sundry gentlemen of quality in Drury Lane in London he bitt his thumb saying, 'I care not this much for your King.' And evidence was admitted to show that the prisoner was a man of Spain, in which country the biting of one's thumb is a token of scorn in the highest degree, and will bear an action of Disgrace, just as spitting in one's face will in England. He was afterward hanged drawn and quartered for his heinous offence."

IX.

Of Pagitt's own career as a barrister it is difficult to write with confidence at this far stretch of time. He was, as we have seen, a man of infinite pains and not likely to overlook the smallest detail in any case. But we may doubt whether—apart from the family—many briefs came to his hand. He would seem to have felt unsuited for pleading in open court, and to have transferred himself in consequence to the Chancery side. In the seclusion of his own chambers, no doubt, he drafted feoffments without end. There is an elaborate opinion in the manuscript touching the disputed title of his father's lands, and some notes of proceedings taken out by him against his stepmother in the administration of his father's estate. But family briefs and family benefactions are frail things to depend on for a living, as every barrister knows; and besides, "in those crazie and tickle times," to borrow the language of his Inn, no man might carve out the fashion of his life. It was something to find security, let alone success. So the careful Justinian took heed in time and set himself to find a place. He tabulates in his book a dozen "meanes to procure an office and how to be presently placed in one," and makes a list of those gentlemen in the Middle Temple whose influence may be useful—to wit, Selden, Spelman, Harrington, Ireton, and Whitelocke, some of the best men of that day.

His importunities were rewarded at last with the post of *Custos Brevium* and Recorder of the King's Bench. He becomes suddenly an important person. He is beset with a swarm of

suitors begging clerkships in his office; he appraises their merits and demerits as though he were deviling for the Recording Angel in the preparation of his brief for Doomsday, and his judgments are duly entered in the book. Once only does he stretch a point and give a clerkship out of affection, namely, to Elias Ashmole, his cousin, who according to contemporary judgment was "the greatest virtuoso and curioso that ever was known or read of in England before his time." Elias had shared chambers with Justinian in Elm Court for two years while Tom Pagitt went to be Serjeant to the Sumpter; and one finds in his diary a glowing eulogy upon his patron for the appointment. But for all that he resigns it within the month; "the terms are too hard for me," he says.

Then the civil war began. The country was forced to take sides. There were affrays even in the Middle Temple. Justinian's uncle, Sir Roger Twysden, was imprisoned, and Royden Hall sequestered by the Roundheads. His kinsman Sir Justinian Isham was fined two thousand pounds. His venerable cousin, Ephraim Pagitt, was forced to quit St Edmund's in Lombard Street, where he had been rector forty years—"merely for quietness sake," as the official account declared. But as we might suspect, these storms of war passed without breaking over Justinian's head. There was little need to suppress *him* for quietness' sake. All that we hear of him indeed through these noisy years is a humble petition to the Treasury for a larger room in which to keep the records, and a letter in Latin to his brother Tom bewailing the condition of his weakened and emaciated body. "It seems as though, just now, everyone is experimenting on me. The learned gentleman to whom I first had recourse treated me with superb indifference, but the eminent Dr Hinton (physician in ordinary to the King) has prescribed a julep to be taken in the mornings and in the afternoons, a draught of milk mingled with mountain-green that has just been steeped in rose-water. Another advises lozenges for the chest, and Egyptian ointment well rubbed in with a warm hand, while my father-in-law would have me wear a wrap of scarlet flannel, and swallow some powders made of snails. Tell me pray what you think of all these treatments. Yours (carissime frater) in sickness and in health, in life and death. J. P."

X.

This is the place to speak of a more serious change in Justinian's life, which befell some little time before the civil war. If anything it was thrust upon him by his father. About the year 1634 the latter reminded Justinian that he

was the eldest son, and should consider his duty to perpetuate the family name. By way of reply Justinian composes an essay entitled, "The character of the wife I would choose," and closes it with Solomon's bitter sentence, "One man have I found amongst a thousand, but a woman I have not." The years of misery with Mazaretta had plainly soured him against the sex, and he delights to point out to his thrice-married father what contentious and illogical creatures these women are. "Only the other day," he writes, "when I was in the street, I heard one say to another, 'Thou art a whore, a dishonest wretch,' and presently after she did say, 'I am as honest and as good a woman as thyselfe every inch of thee.'"

After a stubborn resistance of two years the forces of nature and family precedent prove stronger than his will; he accepts the suggested hand of Dorcas Willcox, daughter of Richard Willcox, citizen and haberdasher of London, and is married to her on the seventh of July 1636. They go to live in the village of Monken Hadley, at "a very faire house surnamed Ludgraves scytuate in a valley near Enfeylde Chase." The house stands to this day, no longer indeed the home of a Pagitt, but perverted to the use of a preparatory school; or rather one should say "reverted," for even before Pagitt's day the house had been granted to one Francis Atkinson, "who out of a design truly generous and public, endeavouring to prevent the inconvenience of irregulated youth, set up a school or academy here for the education of a select number of Gentlemen's sons of good quality."

Thenceforward honours and infants come thick and fast. A little son is born on the first anniversary of the wedding day, just in time to receive the kiss and the name of his grandfather before the latter dies. Then follow two daughters, a miniature Justinian, and finally boy twins. So the family line was secured. And now having been sufficiently obedient to his father, Justinian settles down to his own devices. He takes on the fashion of a country squire, and extends his domain by buying a portion of the Enfield Chase. He chaffs the neighbouring farmer for consulting an almanac-maker before scything his crop of hay, and is delighted because it pours on the day advised. But he does not himself despise the advice of cousin Ashmole, the astrologer, when his own grass comes to be ripe.

XI.

As it turned out, the sun shone well upon Justinian at this time; for apart from his hay, he is appointed to the Commission of the Peace for the County of Middlesex, Com-

missioner for the Taxes in the same area, and apparently knighted, though his name is not to be found in the official list of knights. He is even selected by the Council of State as a man of capacity to deal with problems of public safety. One finds a letter addressed to him in July 1659 from his old friend Sir James Harrington, at that time President of the Council: "Hearing that a rude multitude from Enfield Town have broken down the hedges of an enclosure, and threaten to cut down the houses as well,[1] we desire you to examine the business, and proceed according to law to suppress the tumult, and in case you require further help, have ordered two troops of horse to be in the neighbourhood to act under your orders for the public good."

A more peaceful honour came to him the following year in the friendship of Samuel Pepys. They met at Westminster Hall for the first time on the 30th August 1660, and dined together at Heaven's coffee-house.[2] It was the love of music that drew them together, for Pagitt was a great player on the organ and the viol, and Pepys was wont to be "transported ravished and soul-enwrapped with all kinds of wind-musique," and could himself play on the flageolet.

Two years later the diarist notes down, "At Lord Sandwich's. Pagitt being there, Will Howe and I and he played over some things of Locke's which pleased us well, it being the first music I have heard for a great while." Again in December of that year, after hearing service in the King's Chapel, they forgather in the same nobleman's house. "Met Howe and Pagitt the Counsellor, an old lover of musique. We sang some Psalms of Mr Lawes and played some symphonies till night. Had great store of good musique." The last record of their meeting is in 1664, when Pepys strolls round to Pagitt's rooms in town and finds him at chamber music "with Dr Walgrave, an Englishman bred at Rome, who plays the best on the lute that I ever heard man."

Of the rest of Pagitt's acts and emoluments there is no record remaining; no annotated sermons of the Hadley Rector, no further comminations against his stepmother, no more *Examen Salutis meae.* Nothing indeed but a blank silence extending over seven years which breaks for a moment on a Latin epitaph and passes into the unbroken silence of the tomb. On the 2nd January 1669 the dust of

[1] This disorder was due to the sale and enclosure of Enfield Chase from 1652 onwards, by which the local farmers were deprived of common land which, as they claimed, had been enjoyed for 300 years. Justinian disposed of the matter by appointing a Commission to inquire.

[2] A place of entertainment in Old Palace Yard, on the site of which the Committee Rooms of the House of Commons now stand. It is called in 'Hudibras' "False Heaven at the end of the Hall."

Sir Justinian Pagitt, Custos Brevium et Recordorum de Banco Regis was laid to rest in the Church of St Giles-in-the-Fields, close to those chambers in Elm Court where as a youth he had meditated on the mysteries of life and death. Beneath the pride of his coat-of-arms and the humble confidence of his motto, "Deo Restituit," he sleeps securely, where stepmothers cease from troubling and recorders are at rest.

Ten months later his widow slept beside him. Her own memorial is in plain English, and commends her virtues simply by giving the number of her children. As for her sons, Justinian alone survived, and perpetuated the memory of his father by presenting a cottage to the parson and the clerk, and six tenements for the use of decayed householders within the parish of Hadley. The latter, though rebuilt, are still known as the "Pagitt Rooms." One other memorial there is — if one could but discover it—namely, a panegyric poem entitled, *Ad ornatissimum Justinianum Pagitt Arm. Custodem Brevium*, the composition of Payne Fisher, some time Poet-Laureate to the Protector—or, as he styled himself after the Restoration, "the chief scribbler and pamphleteer to His Infernal Majesty." The poem is referred to by Antony Wood as existing in his day, but it never came to be printed, and hitherto my searches have been in vain. It is possible that this portrait-study may attract it to the light.

. . . . . .

As for the lady Mazaretta, the villain of this piece, it must be told that she survived all her enemies and lived victorious to the verge of ninety years. Her career adds one more melancholy example of the good estate of the wicked and the inequitable lot of mortals here below. For while the soft pliable natures have but a few days on the earth, and mostly in the shade, the wicked seem to bask, like the bay-trees, in the sun of uncounted years. According to her physician, Mazaretta's appetite was enormous to the end.

But where is she now?

REGINALD L. HINE.

ON THE WALL.

BY ZERES.

"Old men who have followed the Eagles since boyhood say that nothing in the Empire is more wonderful than the Wall."

—*Confidences of Parnesius the Centurion in Britain.*

BETWEEN Burma and Assam, and farther to the north between Assam and Thibet, lie a series of wild mountain ranges that are practically unexplored. In these inhospitable and almost trackless regions a steaming tropical sun and an annual rainfall of some two hundred inches both combine to raise dense barriers of Gargantuan vegetation so formidable that pigmy man is often unable to penetrate them. Here and there, however, among their depths live—where it is possible to live at all without being choked by the strangling jungle—a score of different savage races. Those Englishmen who know them well can differentiate between such jungle tribes, and will tell you that in reality few of them are exactly alike either in racial antecedents or personal idiosyncrasy; but the ordinary mortal who encounters such exotic aborigines for the first time may well be pardoned if he sees little or nothing to choose between them. Utter savages, wild men of the woods, trappers of game, herdsmen (who even domesticate bison!), and occasional head-hunters, they occupy themselves with poisoned-arrow warfare, personal vendettas that are decided by the domestic *dao*,[1] and the earnest study of every variety of demon propitiation and animism known to the Theosophical Society. Their almost impenetrable forests teem with big game—tiger, wild elephant, and buffalo abounding,—while, as a general rule, their rushing mountain rivers are well stocked with fish.

Many of them are foul feeders, and a whole family will camp under the lee of a trapped elephant until its stinking carcase has been completely consumed. . . . Races unpleasing in habit and custom, it still remains to be said in their favour that they are neither cannibals nor teetotalers. When raiding, these frontier races have not always in the past restricted their activities to intertribal warfare among themselves, and the lonely tea-planter living in remote districts has been the occasional object of their unwelcome attentions. Exciting stories of white women helping their husbands to defend their bungalows against the rushes of savage head-hunters recall Fenimore Cooper's novels of Red Indian and white settler life in

[1] A heavy knife.

America. To mention a few of the names of these prehistoric Bushmen — Chinns, Singphos, Nagas, Abors, Kukis, Daphlas, Mishmis, and Ankas —is probably to convey little or nothing to the English mind;[1] yet in the past they have not been altogether dissociated from our island story, and at rare intervals their names have cropped up in the English Press. When their names have appeared in print at all, it has generally been in connection with the murder of some British official. As in many other parts of our complex Empire, the proximity to civilisation of such barbarous backwoods necessitates the presence of some local levies to keep the peace. Even during a European War such military precautions still have to be taken, otherwise a whole countryside might be pillaged. In the case of the dark lands that we are now describing, a dozen battalions of military police are the wardens of the marches. In normal times native militias are trained and led by regular military officers, seconded from their regiments; and although in war-time most of these have now been released for service in Mesopotamia, they have been replaced by "crocks," who, even if no longer fit to support the strain of a prolonged campaign, are still quite capable of waging intermittent savage warfare. The duties of such men—and their confrères all the Empire over—are many and varied. Sometimes they sit for months in a lonely outpost, wishing that the destinies of the British Empire had not been cast in Asia or Africa; on other occasions they conduct punitive patrols against erring tribes, while more frequently they soothe by diplomacy shy or restless ones on the verge of tribal stampede. Little honour is theirs, and no glory at all, because hunting as they do in couples—or more often singly—there is nobody to chronicle their exploits. Their lot is fever, fatalism, and a very great loneliness, for in the wilds of Asia and Africa the white man dies swiftly, doctorless and alone, in the arms of some black but kindly savage. During Armageddon their task is not dissimilar from that of the Roman legionaries in ancient Britain, who, unrelieved in their weary vigil and cut off from civilisation, went on holding the Great Wall against the Picts and Scots at a moment in history when Rome herself, embarrassed by graver conflicts nearer home, could give but little thought to her distant provinces and far-flung outposts.

. . . . . .

"*Good* morning," said the subaltern, with offensive heartiness, "have you used Pears' Soap?"

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[1] The tribesmen under discussion do not as a rule use these names among themselves. Such terms were coined by their Assamese or Bengali neighbours, and signify "naked men," "tattooed men," "jungle men," "eater of a thousand hearts" (*i.e.*, warriors), &c.

"No," replied his Captain, emerging from a lopsided bivouac tent, and struggling with an emotion that finally overcame his efforts to suppress it—"No, Peter, I . . . well, haven't: nor any other . . . soap either! I've just discovered that coming into camp last night, half my kit went down the *khud*[1] during that landslip. . . ." He ended his remarks with adjectives of appropriate calibre, and then proceeded to loot the subaltern's sponge-bag. Their ablutions completed, the two soldiers seated themselves on a waterproof sheet and watched the preparations that were being made for their early camp breakfast. These were being conducted by a dishevelled down-country bearer, assisted by a small *chokra* of evil mien and sinister aspect. In normal life the Captain belonged to the Royal Regiment of Artillery, and how or why he now found himself in command of a detachment of Gurkha Irregulars concerns no one but himself. He wore two African medal ribbons that were much faded and frayed at the edges, and a black patch over one eye recorded the work of the Turk in Gallipoli. Peter, his subaltern, was a restless fox-terrier-owning youth from the Sikh Brigade, whose only claim to immediate respectability lay in the possession of a pair of ragged khaki shorts. The rest of his shrinking person was inadequately concealed by his bath towel, and as this flapped wildly in the eddying breeze, an ugly purple scar was plainly visible above his left breast. He had acquired this souvenir at Tanga.

Beneath them the thickly wooded hillside fell abruptly out of sight; but had they cared to gaze straight ahead across the dizzy emptiness of cloud-filled valley just below, another huge mountain range would have rewarded their efforts. Neither, however, did gaze as we have suggested that they might have done, because both were sick to death of mountain scenery, and tinned Oxford sausages frizzling over the camp fire seemed to them at the moment to be far more worthy of meditative contemplation than all the sunrises of Central Asia put together. The morning dew was heliographing them a thousand messages over the hills; the passionless kiss of the laughing young mountain wind fell carelessly upon the boldly offered petals of the flaunting wild orchids around them; the roar of the waterfall below them rose thunderingly in their ears; but Gallio-like they cared for none of these things, but simply cursed the cook.

"When in Allah's name will those sausages be ready, Alla Bux. . . . God strafe that *chokra;* what *will* he do next?"

"Hazri taiar hai" (breakfast is ready), at last announced the crouching abomination in muddy mualin, as it blew stertorously upon the damp and unhappy fire; "refrain from drinking the *Water*

[1] *Khud*=hillside.

Sarse direct from the bottle-neck—for see it is broken." The soldiers ate hungrily, and then lighting their strong Burmese cheroots watched the noiseless Gurkha sentry at the edge of the forest upon his panther-like patrol. Save for the low *click, purr, squeak* of his sheathed kukri rubbing against his well-oiled leather belt, he made no sound at all, as barefooted he picked his way delicately through the dripping undergrowth. It was rather a pretty sight watching him, because in many ways the little Gurkha resembles the wary jungle creatures of his native land; and if out of his proper environment in a French cathedral city, he can give most of us a lead across a Himalayan glacier or through a Nepalese forest. The rest of the force—some two hundred rifles—lay huddled in a re-entrant down the hillside. Their grinning Mongolian faces, short sturdy build, Baden-Powell slouch hats, and bare knees, unhampered by the khaki shorts of their practical uniform, all combined to give an impression of Boy Scouts encamped for a picnic, rather than real live soldiers out upon the war-path.

"Tell you what it is," said the Captain, after a long silence, knocking a great grey ash off his cheroot, "I'm blowed if I know what we're supposed to be doing up here."

"How do you mean?" asked the subaltern.

"Well, we know that the Umptieth clan of the Chinn whatnots have been uppish on the Burma side of the frontier, and apparently Burma's asked us to co-operate from this direction. However, the discreet orders that have slowly filtered down to me from Simla, through the Politicals, seem to leave it in considerable doubt as to whether I'm to imitate the Welsh Mission, and convert the local heathen to Grace when I meet them, or contrariwise burn their villages, destroy their crops, and, generally speaking, rub their noses in the dirt."

"Explain," suggested the subaltern laconically, as boy-like he spat down the tempting void of the precipice, "remember I'm quite in the dark about our orders. Haven't had a sight of the footling things.' The captain fumbled in his mildewed haversack and produced an enormous screed of paper.

"Well, I'm not to act in an unnecessarily arbitrary manner," he quoted, "but rather to reason with the recalcitrant clansmen, and explain to them that——"

"Fancy reasonin' with a Chinn!" giggled the subaltern; "might as well reason with a missin' link!"

"To begin with," replied his senior severely, "we aren't dealing with the Chinns at all, *that's* Burma's show; and further, the races in general to which you so flippantly allude as being, well, somewhat backward in culture, are considered in Simla to represent an 'ethnological problem of absorbing interest.' *That* comes at the end of my orders."

"Rummy way of writin' orders," commented the subaltern professionally; "but here, of course, we're all blasted policemen,—— I forgot. Go on."

"If," continued the Captain, ignoring his junior's repeated interruptions, "the clans on our side do attempt to cross this watershed and join their confounded friends Burma way, how on earth am I to stop them without some shooting occurring? And if it comes to a scrap, I suppose some young civilian in Simla will say I'm a Hun, and the 'Bengalee'[1] will call me a Nero."

"Never mind if they do," comforted the subaltern; "life isn't long enough to listen to the quacking of every d——d fool, who thinks himself subtly superior—the world's stiff with them,—the great thing is to do one's job decently, hang the expense, and to blazes with the gallery boys' applause."

"Without realising it, Peter, you've had a brain-wave. If, since the days of Nelson, England has always expected every man to do his duty, she has also always expected him to disobey his formal orders, and take the consequences. If the results are happy, England takes the credit; if disastrous, the local man gets broke. It's a splendid game—from a Secretary of State's point of view."

"Talkin' of Nelson and sailors," said the subaltern rather irrelevantly, as he frantically attempted to free a bare brown and briar-scratched knee from the attentions of a cluster of hungry leeches, "I wish to goodness that I were a blue-and-gold-clad asheat,[2] and lived in a civilised ward-room on service, instead of assing about these stinkin' jungles. Look at my knees—they are all bloody—and when the leeches aren't biting you the rest of the local fauna start gettin' to work. By the way, is that a dead root or a snake? . . . yes, *that* thing near your hand. . . ."

The Captain rose hastily, and proceeded to brain an excellent specimen of *cobra capello* that had been sunning itself neighbourly by his side. "Charming country in which to convalesce," he remarked, reseating himself; "and now, Peter, it's time we came to some decision about these downtrodden head-hunters. Where has the map got to? The contours are all wrong, by the way—probably sketched by some mad sapper. You might call up the *Dobhashis*[3] who were out last night, and we'll see how the land lies."

A long conference ensued between the British officers and their local advisers, and finally the Captain threw down the map with the air of one who has made up his mind. "Look here," he said to his subaltern, "from what these chaps tell us, there seems

[1] A native newspaper published in Calcutta. At birth it was spoon-fed on the dregs of British Radicalism.

[2] The old Army's nickname for a sailor.

[3] Lit., two-tongued—*i.e.*, interpreters, who in those hills frequently act as go-betweens or intelligence agents in addition to their ordinary duties.

no doubt whatever that the Umpty-first clan mean business, and intend crossing this range with the idea of chipping in with their pals on the other side. Already they're restless, and have raided villages near them, carrying off a score or so of their enemies' heads; and it appears that their war-drums were beating all yesterday afternoon. If they really do get started off on the war-path, it seems to me that the whole countryside will flare up and follow their example. Enthusiasm is infectious. That being the case, why not strafe them at once, and so put the fear of God into the rest before it's too late? It'll mean ignoring the political stunt of polite remonstrance, and somebody's going to be killed in the process; but in the long-run prompt and vigorous action applied at the psychological moment to the focus of unrest should justify itself. Because otherwise, if all the clans rise, it'll mean a pukha military expedition against them and any amount of bloodshed; *that* would be a pity, because there's no real vice in the Umpty-first, they only hunt heads same as we do racing Pots or other people C.I.E.'s."

"Quite so," agreed the subaltern, "and the sooner we start the better." They again conferred with their local guides as to ways and means, and finally decided to make a night march against the nearest rebel village, with a view to attacking it at dawn the next day. The afternoon was well advanced before all their various preparations were completed, and then they again forgathered for tea. "By the way," said the subaltern suddenly, "do you know it's only a fortnight to Christmas?"

"Really?" The Captain's tone lacked interest, and the subaltern flushed a little.

"I expect you'll think me an awful ass, but I take Christmas rather seriously, particularly in this God-forsaken country."

The Captain grunted. "I suppose you connect it with England," he said. "Plum-pudding and indigestion, mistletoe and flappers, forced amiability on the part of one's relations, and the local parson spouting unwarrantable optimism into the Family Pew!" The speaker smiled what was meant to be a cynical smile, but which in reality only succeeded in being rather a wry and twisted one. He had not been in England for over seven years: his liver was out of order, and further, his blood was poisoned by malaria. His best friend couldn't have called him an optimist.

The subaltern laughed. "Oh, there are other reasons as well," he replied cheerfully.

"Such as?"

"Well, for one thing — although, as you know, I ain't exactly pious — Christmas stands for rather a jolly sort of idea,—don't you think so?"

The Captain stared. "This is quite a new side to your character, Peter," he said; "and, to be candid, I don't mind betting that there's a woman in the case!"

The subaltern blushed guiltily.

"Well, yes," he confessed

confusedly. "You see, I'm engaged to be married, and I got an awf'lly rippin' sort of letter from my best girl last mail. Women put these sort of stunts rather decently, don't they? Sent me a Christmas card, too. Dashed artistic one. All robins an' bells an' frost . . ."

The Captain grunted again. "When's the ghastly tragedy to come off?" he inquired sympathetically.

"As soon as I've saved enough pay," replied the subaltern simply. "After I was sloshed in East Africa, I got them to send me up here on light duty. I was a bit dipped, you see, and you can't spend money on polo or racin' in these hills."

"True," assented his senior grimly, "you can't. And how long will it take you to square your debts?"

"Oh, about another six months, I suppose," replied the subaltern carelessly. "It seems an awful long time to wait, though, doesn't it?"

"Impatience," said the Captain oracularly, "is the curse of modern youth. As far as my rather hazy Biblical reminiscences go, I believe that there was once an esteemed patriarch who worked and waited seven whole years for the object of his affections."

"She must have been a bit long in the tooth by the time they did get to church," replied the subaltern ungallantly. "But I must bust off now and dish out that reserve ammunition."

. . . . . .

The Maze at Hampton Court is mere child's play compared with a twisty jungle-path in North-Eastern India; and, further, there are no snakes at Hampton Court. We said "path"; but to the European eye such jungle arteries are often indiscernible, for their course is only marked by a series of broken twigs amid bushes that are armpit high. As you stumble through the baffling thickets of a hillside that is often nearly perpendicular, the leading file who guides your faltering footsteps seems to take a malicious pleasure in bending back, and then suddenly releasing in your face every branch and bramble that is sufficiently elastic for his purpose. Even as upon night operations smoking is forbidden, so similarly on such occasions the solace of profanity is denied the soldier, and in consequence you must perforce grin and bear such indignities in silence. A *mithun*[1] or a *go'n'r*[2] snort indignantly from some dark lair close by, and you wonder whether it is going to charge; a tiger gives tongue in the farther distance; and finally a firefly settles on and sticks to your streaming forehead, investing you with a saintly halo to which you cannot remember possessing any immediate claim. When you are thoroughly sick of the whole business, some careless savage will suddenly discharge a lethal weapon at the flank of the

[1] Wild bison = *mithun*.

[2] Rhinoceros = *go'n'r*.

column, and a missile which —judging from its peculiar noise during flight—must be about the size of an orange, describes a parabola, and striking a coolie in the stomach winds him for at least ten minutes. Thus jungle-fighting begins all the world over, from the Amazon to the Brahmaputra. However, upon arrival before an enemy village itself more serious work may be expected, and indeed you often experience a very *mauvais quarte d'heure*. In the case of the Hill-Bushmen of the North-East Frontier of India their tactics vary very considerably, but of most it may be said that unless they are raiding for loot or vengeance, or are filling in their spare time by cutting up a convoy, they almost invariably adopt a defensive *rôle*. The actual methods which they employ again differ in detail; but stockades cunningly concealed in the forest, supported by the timely employment of *rockshoots*, form the backbone of their defence. A *rockshoot* is a rough-and-ready engineering stratagem, which is most effective in mountain warfare, and explained briefly it consists in toppling half a hillside—avalanche-wise—upon your unwary opponent below. Further, these tribes will dig hidden pits full of pointed and poisoned stakes, which if fallen into obviate the necessity of any more formal funeral. Fortunately for the white frontiersman in this part of the world, the denizens of these tracts are—unlike the Afridi marauder of the North-West Frontier — but poorly armed. Still in a type of flickering jungle warfare, where you seldom sense your enemy until you are within twenty yards of him, a smooth-bore musket that discharges a yard of looted telegraph wire, or a crossbow that releases an arrow tipped with deadly aconite, are weapons by no means to be despised.[1] It was about 4 A.M. — that uncomfortable hour before dawn—when Peter and his Captain debouched from a ragged apology for a pass and scrambled quietly across a raw rent in the hillside that had been torn open by a recent earthquake. Trees and shrubs lay uprooted in grotesque confusion, and while these offered obstacles to the column's progress, they were less formidable than the dense and clinging young bamboo higher up the hillside which had escaped the cataclysm. The tropical rain was pouring steadily in dark torrents. It fell in sheets rather than in drops. Having fallen, it rebounded from the earth and then leapt skywards again. The air was lashed by drenching spray and breathing became a conscious labour. The general effect in the forest was submarine in its nature: you almost expected to see fish darting through the trees in lieu of the stunned birds which fell from their drowned branches.

"Talk about the takin' of Lung-tung-pen," gasped the subaltern as he dashed the rain-water from his blinded eyes for

[1] Even a graze from a poisoned arrow may kill a healthy man more rapidly than the bite of a cobra.

the twentieth time that morning. "Swimming the Irrawaddy must have been positively dry work compared with messing about the bottom of *this* damned aquarium. We shall probably meet a mermaid in a minute. Hullo! . . ."

The rain ceased suddenly, and with the rising sun the steaming jungle turned into a purgatory of the vapour-bath variety. A slight crackle in the undergrowth just ahead and their native guide sank upon one knee. He then made a low warning noise like the spit of an angry snake. So natural was his reproduction of this *p'his't* that Peter instinctively shrank backwards, and in doing so his light deerskin boot dislodged a stone. Gathering impetus, and snowball-like attracting to itself other similar debris, it fell bounding down the *khud*-side, the noise which followed sounding prodigious midst the awesome quiet of the lonely mountains. The old Gurkha *subadar* just had time to throw his subaltern a reproachful glance and then things began to happen. To quote Mr Kipling, "a snider squibbed in the jungle" —many sniders, in fact. Also a score of bows twanged rudely from nowhere in particular, and a feathery shower of poisoned arrows rustled through the leaves.

"Down, men!" shouted their leader, "and don't all crowd together like a bunch of bally bananas! Now then, section volleys to your front, and clear the jungle. None of your independent firing there, Peter, or the men 'll blaze away all their ammunition in less than no time. . . . We're scallywags, remember. *That's* right . . . do it again." A fairly respectable volley crashed out three times, but the enemy stood their ground and returned the fire. A rock in front of the subaltern was thrice monotonously chipped by heavy grey splashes of lead. "Shootin' not too dusty," he observed quietly; "this is going to be war, not punishment!" Indeed the enemy's primitive weapons were taking effect at this close quarter ding-dong forest fighting, and under such local conditions the police's superiority in armament became more a theoretical than a practical quantity. Further, they were heavily outnumbered and could see little or nothing of their hidden enemy. A Gurkha on the subaltern's right fell forward without a cry. A small blue-pencilled mark showed up vividly against the brown of his forehead, but the back of his head—or rather its absence —was mercifully hidden from view. Another rifleman rose to obtain a better aim at some elusive target in the bushes forty yards away, but before the rifle reached his shoulder he collapsed again and stoically drew an arrow from his thigh. He, too, presently moved no more.

"Every time a cocoanut!" muttered the subaltern, reloading his sporting *Mannlicher*. "What price *that* Aunt Sally?" and he fired as he spoke at a bedizened savage who wore a barbaric head-dress ornamented with wild-boar's tushes. His aim was true, and the Bushman fell clattering among his

own weapons — spear, shield, and tower musket.

"We'd better get round their flank," yelled the Captain above the din; "they've got the bulge over us, behind that blasted stockade, and the ground in front of it's all full of poisoned man-traps!" He blew his whistle as he spoke and led his men up the hillside. Here the jungle grew thinner and a patch of open *jhum*[1] afforded them a brief tactical breathing space. A portion of the village now revealed its insanitary existence, and rows of human heads intermingled with animal masks grinned hideously from the walls. From the courtyards within rose the unceasing bray of the war-drum, while a crowd of excited tribesmen outside were dancing the national war-dance. Tossing their arms upwards they advanced with shrill blood-curdling cries, stamping upon the ground with rhythmical precision, and shouted occasional defiance at the handful of Gurkhas. The distance between the opposing forces had now widened—as a result of the flanking movement—to about two hundred yards. As the jungle all round the British force was rustling with unseen enemies, the Captain decided that a bold bayonet charge upon the village itself was the best way of clearing up the immediate situation. The Military Police dashed forward. One section got into difficulties, and were held up by a sort of elephant-trap, full of sharpened bamboos, which might or might not have been poisoned, but the remainder went through the enemy as though they had been brown paper, and cleared the village in one irresistible rush. Then the Gurkhas drew their *kukris* and chased the fleeing tribesmen into the jungle beyond. But here—behind the village — the enemy had reserved his tactical *pièce de résistance*. As the little Gurkhas panted up the steep hillside, like eager terriers after evicted rats, a long low rumble was heard, that grew in sullen intensity every second. "Look out!" shouted the subaltern warningly; "here comes a rockshoot!" He was well out of its direct course himself, but on turning to warn his men saw a wounded bugler lying full in the path of the coming avalanche. He tore back to drag him out of danger, but was just too late, and a moment afterwards a whole landslip of rocks, earth, and trees swept down with the roar of an express train. The full force of the "shoot" missed the two men, but they did not escape its violence altogether, and officer and bugler were flung fifty yards down the hillside, and half buried under the heavy debris. A stray Bushman, *dao* in hand, rushed forward to secure the unconscious white boy's head, but a Gurkha shot him in the back before he reached his intended victim. The temporary confusion among the British force that the discharge of the rockshoot created had been anticipated by the enemy, and

[1] *Jhum* = sporadic cultivation in the middle of the forest.

they seized the psychological moment to counter-attack. Then, as the Captain said later, "some dirty work occurred in the offing." The Bushmen, who were in force, fought stubbornly but wildly; the outnumbered Gurkhas equally stubbornly and with disciplined co-operation. For five minutes it was any one's victory, but then the *kukri* prevailing over the *dao*, the enemy were *chopped* back—that is the only description — into their native jungle again. Both *dao* and *kukri* are weapons which are suitable for cutting up bison carcasses, and the results, when they are used upon humanity, are not at all pretty. Despite the comparatively light casualties on both sides, the small clearing behind the village was a bloody shambles, where fantastically-clad barbarian and more soberly-equipped Gurkha lay in inextricable death-grips, still worrying each other's wounds. It was indeed war as the cinema depicts it: crude, personal, and gory. The police, only pausing to retrieve their dead and wounded, set fire to the now deserted village, and then climbed to a higher spur in the mountains. Here a position was occupied where a more extensive field of fire was obtainable, and where, in consequence, the patrol was less liable to surprise. With the rest of the wounded, the still unconscious subaltern was jerked and pushed up the steep ascent by a dozen rough though willing hands. Perhaps it was as well that he did remain unconscious, for twice the men who bore him slipped and fell, and once they dropped him altogether. His left leg had sustained a compound fracture below the knee, while a sharp stake had laid bare the torn muscles of his calf. Allowing for the despatch of a messenger to civilisation, and for the return journey, there was no prospect of obtaining a doctor within a month. On the Wall, however, such *contretemps* are not uncommon.

"You might as well try your hand at it," said the subaltern a fortnight later, "because as things are at present my number's up all right, so what's the odds if you do make a mess of it?"

It was Christmas Eve, and he lay shivering on a bed of sodden bracken, wrapped in the Captain's clammy mackintosh. From time to time he was shaken from head to foot by those great shuddering rigors that so often accompany acute blood-poisoning. The ceaseless rain, its direct force broken by the roof of the leaky *basha*[1] which sheltered him, alternately dripped upon or sprayed across his flushed and upturned face. Under the stress of fever, pain, and hardship, he looked exactly what he was—namely, a tired child, who had been systematically overworked for nearly three years. His broken leg lay strapped to a rough

[1] *Basha*=a primitive and temporary native shelter, hastily constructed with branches and grass.

splint. In addition to being broken, sepsis had set in, and the injured limb had now become discoloured and fearfully swollen. The Captain had done what he could, but hitherto his surgery had not been conspicuous for its success, and to-day it was plain both to surgeon and patient alike that a crisis was at hand.

The Captain was kneeling by the subaltern's apology for a bed, vainly attempting to shelter him from the teasing rain-trickle off the roof, while he supported a large calf-bound volume, the contents of which both of them were earnestly perusing. It was entitled 'Medicine for the Masses,' and upon its flyleaf was written in beautifully fine and clear handwriting—"To dearest George, from Aunt Matilda." "Dearest George" was the Captain. There were two or three other works of equal scientific value lying scattered upon the grass. "You see," said the Captain hopefully, "if the skipper of a tramp steamer could do the trick all right, why shouldn't I be able to? According to the book he hadn't half the outfit that's in our medical wallet; and *we've* got chloroform, which is more than *he* had." The passage alluded to in 'Medicine for the Masses' had reference to what laymen could attempt during emergencies, a case being cited of a captain of a collier saving a seaman's life by amputating his hand in mid-ocean. The two frontiersmen, with the simple optimism of those who have long been accustomed to expect nothing except what their own efforts can accomplish, were seriously discussing the practicability of an amateur amputation in the jungle which might yet save the subaltern's life. The only alternative to so drastic a measure seemed certain death from septic poisoning, and in this connection the subaltern had remarked briefly that he would prefer a run for his money. The Captain had a very extensive and practical knowledge of veterinary science, which he trusted might stand him in good stead, one of the Gurkha sepoys had formerly been trained as a hospital orderly, and finally there was the invaluable medical wallet which contained an assorted jumble of instruments and antiseptics. "The great thing," said the Captain, "is to locate those anterior and posterior tibial arteries. Once they've had ligatures properly applied—and I've often tied ligatures in the horse hospital—there's no real danger of excessive hemorrhage."

"No," replied the subaltern, "and after that I suppose it's more or less a matter of carpentry and keeping things clean." He smiled feebly. "I wonder why we ever employ doctors at all!" he added.

"I've got plenty of nerve for the job," continued the Captain, trying to throw some enthusiasm into his tone. "When I was a kid I was an awful knut at stuffing birds and skinning rabbits, and of course all that sort of thing helps."

"Of course," replied the subaltern; "and Alla Bux

could give me the chloroform." As an anæsthetist the weeping cook might not perhaps have inspired a London surgeon with undue confidence, but snivelling into his unravelled blue puggri he promised faithfully to do his best. "The bettin' ain't exactly in my favour," admitted the subaltern, his voice faltering a little for the first time. "Still, with my leg like an inflated zeppelin, it's obviously my last ruddy chance, so for God's sake get a move on George, before I start funkin' it." He was seized with another terrible shivering fit as he spoke, and buried his burning face in the dripping bracken. The Captain turned away, and diving silently into the medical wallet, slowly selected such surgical instruments as it contained. His expression, as he did so, wasn't a pretty one, because he was mutinously blaspheming all the gods in which he didn't believe for their apparent indifferences to human fate.

"It's a thousand to one, of course, against my making any sort of job of this," he muttered; "only a dashed miracle could save him now, and I don't happen to believe in miracle stunts—not even on Christmas Eve! Still, if the worst comes to the worst," he concluded grimly, "he'd much better hop off the twig under chloroform than wait for sepsis to do the trick. Nasty sticky end sepsis . . . and it's giving him h—ll already." He compared the surgical instruments with a card of corresponding numbered diagrams, and sorting the rusty cutlery, proceeded to boil it.

"I say," said the subaltern, with a fine assumption of carelessness, "by the way, if you don't mind, I think I'll give you my people's address before you begin."

"Quite so," replied the Captain dryly.

"Also, you might just chuck me my *fiancée's* photograph, will you? It's over there in my haversack . . . yes, on the top of that case of tinned salmon."

The Captain complied with his request, and then resumed his immediate task. When all was ready he unostentatiously mixed himself a stiff peg, summoned the ex-hospital orderly, and approached the subaltern with what he trusted was a happy bedside manner. No further conversation ensued between them, but both surgeon and patient shook hands in silence. At that moment, however, an interruption occurred. There was some slight disturbance outside the bivouac. In the distance some Gurkhas sprang to attention. A few seconds later a bedraggled figure, mounted on a small and undignified hill pony, splashed upon the scene. It streamed with water from its pulp-like pith helmet to its sodden polo boots. The rider drew nearer, and gave a view-halloo!

"That you, Blackwall!" he shouted—"Merry Christmas! I say, your patrol looks pretty

damaged. Been bearin' the White Man's Burden lately? Just on my way to Fort Té-häng on special duty. They're all down with cholera, d——n 'em! Believe they've done it on purpose just to do me out of my leave. Personally, I want some quinine and brandy badly. 'Specially brandy. My kit won't be in till dark. Hullo! is that Peter? What's up?"

The Captain laughed a little unsteadily as he shook the newcomer by the hand. "I'm dashed if a miracle stunt hasn't come off after all!" he remarked rather incoherently, more to himself than to the man whom he now recognised as the local civil surgeon.

"What do you mean?"

The Captain explained.

"Good Lord!" cried the cheery little medico, "an' so you were really just going to . . . Good *Lord!* . . . Deuced lucky I happened to come this way; it was absolute chance—as you say, a miracle!" He paused, his professional eye arrested by the Captain's astonishing medical library. "'Medicine for the Masses,'" he read out slowly, "'Every one his own surgeon,' 'What a young girl oughtn't to know,' 'How I ridded myself of superfluous fat in a fortnight.' . . . *Good* Lord! What next, I wonder! Here, let's have a look at him," and he bent over the subaltern's leg. "Amputation," he snapped—"amputation be jiggered; I know a thing or two better than that. But what a light-hearted butcher you must be, Blackwall, to want to dissect your own subaltern!"

The Captain attempted some inadequate excuses, which were swept aside by the outraged follower of Æsculapius. "*I'll* 'medicine for the mass' you, next time you get fever," he threatened darkly, and then his eye fell upon the photograph of the subaltern's *fiancée*. "Death-bed scenes?" he inquired suspiciously. "Not yet awhile, my son! No, not by a very long chalk; but if I know anything about my job, that leg of yours means a whole year's poodle-fakin' in Blighty. Here, you black *thug*"—this to the unfortunate Alla Bux—"just you hand over that chloroform, and stand by to lend me a hand. Wo'ah, mare! . . . So ho! steady there, Peter! . . . suck it down like a man . . . gently does it . . . *that's* right. . . . He's going off beautifully. Here, Blackwall, hand me those tin-openers of yours, and if I were you, I shouldn't look this way for the next half-hour. Hang it, man, you're as white as a ghost already . . . yes *you*, you blanked—er—body-snatcher!"

But for once the Captain had no apt retort ready. He had lit a cigarette, and was staring absent-mindedly into the mist-blurred sunset. Perhaps the foundations of his usual scepticism had just received rather a severe shock. This often happens to men On the Wall.

HAZLITT *v.* 'BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.'

AN ANCIENT CONTROVERSY.

AN unpublished article has just come into my hands, written just a hundred years ago by William Hazlitt. It is a reply, composed with all the energy of heat, to a letter which appeared in 'Blackwood's Magazine' for August 1818, and which was entitled "Hazlitt Cross-Questioned." The signature set at the end of that letter, "An Old Friend with a New Face," gives no clue to its authorship. But it may, with some assurance, be ascribed to John Wilson, whose sympathy with the Lake School is well known. That Hazlitt got the better of the argument is certain. Though the "Old Friend with the New Face" may claim some scores to his credit, his dislike of Hazlitt betrayed him to a reckless insolence, which Hazlitt had no difficulty in countering. For the rest, it may be said that the most of old controversies keep their freshness no longer than Parliamentary debates or the novels of a season. But this one controversy, which raged for many years between 'Blackwood's Magazine' and the Cockney School, has been revived again and again, and it is but fitting that in the same columns in which the attack was made, some account, belated though it be, should be given of Hazlitt's defence.

I.

In the early numbers of 'Blackwood's Magazine' Hazlitt received nothing but praise. His lectures on the English Poets were reported therein by Mr Patmore with approval and admiration. Four months before "The Old Friend with a New Face" wielded his bludgeon, it had been frankly stated by Mr Patmore in the same Magazine "that when Mr Hazlitt's taste and judgment are left to themselves, we think him among the best, if not the very best, living critic on our national literature." Two months later Jeffrey and Hazlitt were gravely contrasted and united in a common panegyric. It is true, they were warned that "their compositions would be like those figures drawn upon the sand by the early mathematicians—figures from which their pupils learned much, but which were washed away by the return of the tide." At the same time the wreaths of "excellence" and "originality" were bound about their heads. And this discerning tribute was paid to Hazlitt: "Persons who are unable to follow the substratum of strong sense in Mr Hazlitt's discourses, are at least able to watch the clink of his epigrammatical humour." In the meantime the attacks upon the Cockney School had been made by Lockhart. The scorpion was delighting to

sting the faces of men. He had held Hunt, who was Hazlitt's ally,—whom Hazlitt, after his wont, was free to attack himself, and yet protected from the attacks of others,—up to public shame and ridicule. Thus the literary battle was engaged, and was fought out by both sides, upon the false field of politics. Henceforth nothing that Hazlitt could do or say was right, while Blackwood and his contributors seemed to Hazlitt clothed always in the garb of sycophants and time-servers. Even Scott himself was grossly libelled for his loyal friendships, and the combatants were well content if only the blows of their cudgels, ill-directed as they were, resounded smartly upon the heads of their adversaries.

II.

So Hazlitt, the "excellent and original" critic of June, became in July an "unprincipled blunderer," and in August was submitted to a brisk cross-questioning. He went willingly into the box, and fiercely turned the tables on his examiner. If only the full reply had been printed in 'Constable's Edinburgh Magazine,' for which no doubt it was intended, the answer from the other side would have been worth reading. For if neither yielded to his foe in discourtesy, they were both "bonny fighters." That Hazlitt was angry is clear from the exordium of his letter, which, says he, the reader may skip over. "Before I answer your questions," he writes, "give me leave to tell you my opinion of the person who asks them. I think then you are a person of little understanding, with great impudence, a total want of principle, an utter disregard to truth or even the character of common veracity, and a very strong ambition to be picked up and paid as a cat's paw. If I were in the habit of using the words Liar, Fool, Coxcomb, Hypocrite, Scoundrel, Blackguard, &c., I should apply them to you, but this would be degrading them still lower unnecessarily, for it is quite as easy to prove you the *things* as to call you the names." Thus the battle begins, and as I turn over Hazlitt's admirable manuscript, and note the bold, determined handwriting, I know that he is well set to the encounter, and will not easily give ground or quarter.

With a full acknowledgment of the truth of his adversary's statement that he is a writer of third-rate books —"you state my pretensions quite as high or higher than I should"—with a familiar hit at Mr Coleridge, and a sneer at Mr Wordsworth and Lord Lonsdale, he denies that he lounges in any booksellers' shops, third or first-rate. "I sometimes, indeed," says he, "lounge away my time in the Fives' Court"—that he has made immortal—"and play rackets instead of answering your questions. But your not knowing me enables you

to say what you please of me." And so at last he faces his opponent resolutely from the witness-box, discussing Wordsworth with him, and pouring contempt upon the poet, after his custom. "The Old Friend with a New Face" had asked him: "Did you or did you not, in the course of your late Lectures on Poetry, infamously vituperate and sneer at the character of Mr Wordsworth—I mean his personal character; his genius even you dare not deny?" Sharply came Hazlitt's reply: "Why not: because I dare not deny my own convictions: certainly I am bound by public opinion to acknowledge in very unsparing terms, and I have in fact gone on the forlorn hope in praising him." The hope was not so grimly forlorn as Hazlitt thought. "As to his personal character," thus he goes on, "I have said nothing about it. I have spoken of his intellectual egotism (truly and warrantably) as the bane of his talents and of his public principles. It is because you cannot answer what I have said on the Lake School of Poetry that you ask me eight impertinent questions."

Hazlitt's reply, it must be admitted, is not conclusive. It is true that he declares at the outset that "Mr Wordsworth is the most original poet now living," but he then proceeds fiercely to castigate him. He prints the familiar tirade which his intellectual frugality persuaded him to use again in his 'Political Essays,' and which assuredly touches not only Wordsworth's poetry but Wordsworth's character. "He tolerates only what he himself creates," thus he writes: "he sympathises only with what can enter into no competition with him, with 'the bare trees and mountains bare, and grass in the green fields.' He sees nothing but himself and the universe. He hates all greatness and all pretensions to it, whether well or ill-founded. . . . He hates all science and all art; he hates chemistry; he hates conchology; he hates Voltaire; he hates Sir Isaac Newton; he hates wisdom; he hates wit." And so covering the whole field of human endeavour with inexhaustible energy, Hazlitt enumerates the hatreds of Wordsworth, and then declares that he has said nothing about Wordsworth's private character! It is a position which he cannot sustain. Such vanity and egoism as he ascribes to Wordsworth are personal and not artistic vices, and here, I think, his opponent is justified of his charge. By a whimsical paradox, Hazlitt, a Jacobin in politics, was a violent anti-Jacobin in literature. He clung closely to the older tradition, and much as he disliked Wordsworth's Tory politics, he disliked still more what he considered the Radical tendencies of his poems. He did not believe that all things are equally fit subjects for poetry. He belaboured the Lake Poets because "they founded the new school on a principle of sheer humanity, or pure nature void of art." He saw them "surrounded, in company with the Muses, by a mixed rabble of idle apprentices and Botany

Bay convicts, female vagrants, gipsies, meek daughters in the family of Christ, of idiot boys and mad mothers, and after them 'owls and night-ravens flew.'" It is pretty invective, but it does not absolve Hazlitt from the charge, nor prove that in applauding Wordsworth's genius he left his character unassailed.

The second question Hazlitt was asked to answer was easily disposed of. "Is it or is it not true," says the cross-examiner, "that you owe all your ideas about poetry or criticism to gross misconceptions of the meaning of his conversation?" This gave Hazlitt precisely the opening which he loved: "I do swear, No, for this reason that I never got any ideas at all from him, for this reason, that he had none to give. All I remember of his conversation turned upon extreme instances of self-will and self-adulation, as the following, which are given *verbatim:* 'That he would hang up the whole of the House of Commons. That he wished Tierney had shot out Mr Pitt's tongue, to put an end to his gift of the gab. That he saw nothing in Lord Chatham's and Lord Mansfield's speeches to admire, and what did it end in, but their being made Lords. That Sir Isaac Newton was a man of a little mind, if we could believe the stories that Coleridge told about him. That as to poetry, there was something in Shakespeare that he could not make up his mind to, for he hated those interlocutions between Lucius and Caius: and as to Milton, the only great merit of the "Paradise Lost" was in the conception or in getting rid of the horns and tail of the Devil, for as to the execution he thought he could do as well or better himself. There is nothing like this in my lectures. There is only one passage which I can charge myself as having taken from his conversation, and I leave it to his adversaries to find it out. . . . Mr Wordsworth's power is not that of analysis or illustration. His head always puts me in mind of Dean Swift's reprimand to his servant, who was trying in vain to break a coal in pieces with a poker—"That's a stone, you blockhead!"'"

We may take it, then, that Hazlitt was perfectly right when he asserted that he had learned nothing of poetry from Mr Wordsworth. Indeed, he had not. He looked upon books with other eyes than Mr Wordsworth's, and from another coign of vantage. The stream of his judgment ran broader if not deeper than the stream of the poet's. And yet we may justly ask ourselves whether he was right to resent the fierce, insolent criticism of others, when he permitted himself to take the last freedom with Mr Wordsworth's reputation. At any rate, his ill-temper was not assuaged when his cross-examiner charged him with ingratitude towards the poet, to whose influence, it was alleged, Hazlitt owed his personal safety, even his existence. In reply to this charge he repeats a story which, says he, Mr Wilson tells in all companies—how an article in 'The

Examiner,' in praise of "The Excursion," was read to the seer by Mr Wilson himself. "'Ha,' said Mr Wordsworth, somewhat appeased, 'there's some sense in this fellow, too: the Dog writes strong. . . . Very well written indeed, sir, I did not expect a thing of this kind,' and strutting up and down the room in high good humour" — there is an inaccuracy here: I am sure Mr Wordsworth never strutted— "kept every now and then wondering who could be the author, he had no idea and should like very much to know to whom he was indebted for such pointed and judicious praise." When Wilson told him that it was Hazlitt's, "our poor philosopher was thrown into a greater rage than ever, and a fit of outrageous incredulity, to think that he should be indebted for the first favourable account that had ever appeared of any work that he had ever written to a person on whom he had conferred such great and unmerited obligations." And if the story be true, nobody would ever dispute the justice of Hazlitt's conclusion: "I think this statement will show that there is little love lost between me and my benefactor."

When his cross-examiner goes on to say that Hazlitt has been "deservedly expelled from 'The Edinburgh Review,'" his retort is apt and ready. "I leave Mr Jeffrey to answer that question, and I also inclose some letters from him to me on the subject of communications for that work, written just before and since the publication of the seventeenth number of 'Blackwood's Magazine.' This imputation alone, which I affirm to be false at the time it was made, but which was meant as a prediction to fulfil itself, strikes at my reputation as an author and my livelihood in the most direct and deliberate way. As to the anxiety of the writer to have me turned out of the E. R. as a disgrace and injury to that work, it is not easy to reconcile this with his denunciation of that publication as a *dying work*, and his wish to see it dead. It seems that he hates the E. R. much, but he hates me more." Such was one of the charges which Hazlitt regarded as actionable, and plainly the "Old Friend with the New Face" could not have it both ways.

III.

From general charges Hazlitt's assailant descended to particular accusations. "Do you not call Mr Canning," he demands with shaking forefinger—"one flash of whose eye, one word of whose lip, would wither you into annihilation—the most contemptible character of the day?" Such a question, of course, left Hazlitt unperturbed. He liked nothing better than to ridicule Mr Canning, and would welcome any charge more gladly than the charge that he had applauded the Anti-Jacobin. "I am not aware," said he, "that Mr Canning's *fade* oratory would wither me into annihila-

tion any more than the sickly smell of a perfumer's shop would wither me into annihilation; but if I have called him the most contemptible character of the day, I grant I have gone too far. It is indeed a bold word to say."

As the dispute continues, the interlocutors, so to say, raise their voices, and shout insults at one another. Hazlitt is denounced for an "impudent charlatan," "a hard-hearted Cockney"; the malignity of ignorance and the drunkenness of folly are imputed to him; he is asked if he knows the Latin for a goose. And he retorts upon his attacker with all the contempt he can muster. "You say," he writes, "that I, who do not know the number of letters in the Greek alphabet, pretend to give an opinion on Mr Porson's literary character. And I say, you lie. I take the common opinion of his classical attainments for granted, but I have said that he was also a man of wit and sense, which I might be a judge of without knowing the letters of the Greek alphabet, which I do know." And again: "You say that I at all times and in all places describe the editors of 'The Scots Magazine' as ninnies and their works as a mill-stone, and I say that you tell the falsehood to do me an injury." So the fight goes on, until Hazlitt arrives at his peroration, in which he resents, very properly, that the epithet "pimpled" should be applied to him. Happily, by our code of to-day, such personal assaults as this are impossible, and perhaps even Hazlitt, living in a rougher time, would have done better to ignore it. But it rankled, as the insult thrown at his Tishy by Jonathan Wild rankled in that lady's chaste mind, and he cannot but ask in Tishy's own accent, "why pimpled, Mr Blackwood, why pimpled?"

"Finally, sir, you call me as a nickname pimpled Hazlitt"—thus the article comes to an end. "And I am not pimpled, but remarkably pale and sallow. You were told of this as a false fact, and you repeated it and still repeat it, declaring to hundreds of persons individually and to the public that you not only do not care for the distinction between truth and falsehood, but that you are superior to being thought to care about it. When Mr Patmore simply stated at the end of his account of my Lectures that you were in a mistake in applying the epithet 'pimpled' to me, you replied that 'I had lately got into a passion with a humble squire who had spied a pimple on my nose'—insinuating with admirable dexterity three falsehoods in one sentence. 1. That it was I who had given the account of my own Lectures. 2. That the person who contradicted your account was in a furious passion. 3. That the humble squire had actually spied a pimple on my nose.

"You say, lastly, in another place (you or one of the set) that I have no opinion of my own, but by contradicting all established and generally received opinion. And you bring as a

proof of this that on the subject of Shakespeare's Poems I differ with Mr Wordsworth, who in the very passage you refer to reprobates all preceding English critics for being of my mind on this point. So that I am here completely with the vulgar. You also, with a candour and a consistency worthy of your temper and understanding, adduce this solitary exception, in an entire volume on Shakespear, to the most unqualified and (what has been objected to as) extravagant praise to shew the absurdity and bad faith of the Edinburgh Reviewers in giving me credit for being an enthusiastic and judicious admirer of Shakespear.

"I had forgot to say that in another part of the same publication (see Review of Mr Lamb's works) you talk of 'the open blasphemy, or which is as bad, hypocritical piety of such reckless unbelievers as Hunt and Hazlitt.' I have never written a word of either open blasphemy or hypocritical piety. Is it answered?" I think it is answered fairly and squarely.

IV.

This voice of Hazlitt's is as a voice from the grave. Yet it is alive with all the dialectic anger of the day. And the anger of that day was purely dialectic. The discourtesy and falsehood, which on either side seemed to embitter the critical controversies of a hundred years ago, were faults of manners rather than of morals. The scope and purpose of the battle were perfectly well understood by all the combatants. To pour ridicule upon an opponent, who held distasteful opinions or had knitted friendships with the enemy, appeared to our grandfathers the first duty of man. In violent attack, in the determination to give a political colour to criticism, Hazlitt and Lockhart are at one. Vituperation gave them an excellent chance to show their skill in onset and defence. They were artists in the sport of intellectual singlestick, and they were quick to take advantage of any opening that their adversary might give them. If we would find their parallel, we must go back to the "flytings," the spirit and manner of which they reproduce after their own fashion. When Montgomerie and Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth fell furiously upon one another, the one spared nothing in invective which might confound the argument or injure the vanity of the other. And they prided themselves on their good temper! "No cankering envy," wrote Montgomerie—

"No cankering envy, malice or despite,
Stirr'd up these men so eagerly to flyte,
But generous emulation."

The boast sounds a little strained to modern ears, but Hazlitt and Christopher North might have echoed it with equal justice.

What the Scots knew as "flyting" was turned to prose, also a favourite controversial weapon of our Elizabethans.

When Thomas Nashe fell upon Gabriel Harvey, he employed all the resources which eloquence and scholarship gave him. He set his victim in every posture suggested by ridicule and contempt. He sketched his career in the grimmest colours, and achieved such a caricature of a man as scorn might suggest and hatred execute. And Gabriel Harvey lagged not behind in insolence; he barbed his shaft with as dire a venom. But who cared what it was all about? The small world of letters watched the display with a critical eye, and gave its praise or blame not to the justice of the cause but to its bitterness or humorous presentation, until at last the dispute seemed tiresome and profitless, and then Whitgift and Bancroft issued their solemn order "that all Nasshes bookes and Doctor Harvyes bookes be taken wheresoever they maye be found, and that none of theire bookes bee ever printed hereafter."

The conflict, then, which raged in the early nineteenth century between 'Blackwood's Magazine' and the Cockney School, is best illustrated by such encounters as Montgomerie's with Hume or Nashe's with Harvey. Unfortunately sentiment and partisanship have pretended that Mr Blackwood's friends were alone blameworthy, that Lockhart and Wilson, out of the wickedness of their hearts, made wanton and boisterous attacks upon all that was seemly and of good repute. In other words, the Whig dogs have once more had their way. They have perverted literary history as they perverted political history to their purpose. They set the story going that Keats died of a review. "Poor Keats! what was sport to the town was death to him." Thus Hazlitt, who, let it be remembered, used Keats chiefly as a stick to beat his critics with, and who found no place for him in his Lectures among living poets. But Keats was far too wise and too strong a man to be "snuffed out" by a hundred articles, and he owed little enough to the interested championship of his friends.

Moreover, it was not the riotous critics of 'Blackwood's Magazine' who set the fashion of controversial abuse. They adopted the fashion from their opponents and in self-defence. They were determined not to leave all the advantages to the other side. When the Magazine was some five years old, and had been assailed with all the volubility of Radical rhetoricians, the Editor explained—he did not apologise for—his policy in a preface. "The simple truth of the affair lies in a nutshell," says he. "For a series of years the Whigs in Scotland had all the jokes to themselves. They laughed and lashed as they liked: and while this was the case, did anybody ever hear them say that either laughing or lashing was among the seven deadly sins?" Assuredly nobody did, and it is one of the puzzles of history that the partiality and injustice of the Whigs has been handed down to our age as a body of incontrovertible gospel.

Now Hazlitt loved the fray for the fray's sake as much as

any man. The author of "A Letter to William Gifford, Esq.," knew well that the flame of invective burned within, and he was not one to hide his light under a bushel. If his politics were all in the future, his criticism was all in the past, and he thought that nobody who did not agree with his platitudes about liberty and reform was capable of a good verse or a good action. Even if his friends were poets he could see little merit in them. Shelley, says he, "has a maggot in his brain, a hectic stutter in his speech, which mark out the philosophic fanatic." He is "chargeable with extreme levity," and Hazlitt wishes that "he would put a stop to the incessant, alarming whirl of his voltaic battery." And what of Keats? The fault of his poems is "effeminacy." Hazlitt hints that they should be classed with the productions of the Della Cruscan school, the "calm peaceable writers," in Dryden's phrase, whose "works should be printed, as they generally are, on hot-pressed paper, with vignette margins." As to Wordsworth and Coleridge, he seemed to think that he had an exclusive right to laugh at these austere prophets, who had once been his friends, and he could find no worthier compeer for Southey than Sir Richard Blackmore! He can forget that Byron is a lord no more easily than that Sir Walter Scott is "an aristocrat in principle." In praising their works he forbears not to insult them both. The fact is, after the rapture of his first meeting with them, he disliked all living poets. "I cannot say that I ever learnt much about Shakespeare or Milton from these professed guides, for I never heard them say much about them"—thus he writes. "They were always talking of themselves and one another." When some one said that he would like to see Shakespeare, for his part, he wrote, he would give a good deal not to see him; "at least, if he was at all like anybody else that I have ever seen."

Though Hazlitt would not permit others unavenged to treat harshly the poets, whom he castigated himself, though he resented, rhetorically, any attack upon himself, he was a man of humour after all, and he must perforce have admitted that in the war of wits both sides might claim the right of abuse. And he himself outstripped in violence and in injustice all the men of 'Blackwood's' and 'The Quarterly.' In the works of no other writer shall you find so large a body of invective. He spared nobody who was in disagreement with him, and few who were in his own camp. His admiration of the Waverley Novels was not far on this side idolatry; and yet he insulted Scott with a poisonous venom, which neither Lockhart nor Wilson would have used against any man. Here are a few of the shameful things which Hazlitt wrote, falsely, about the good Sir Walter, of whose character he knew nothing: "Raised by affluence, the reward of successful industry, and by the voice of fame above

the want of any but the most honourable patronage, he stooped to the unworthy acts of adulation, and abetted the views of the great with the pettifogging feelings of the meanest dependant on office"; and again: "he strewed the slime of rankling malice and mercenary scorn over the bud and promise of genius, because it was not fostered in the hot-bed of corruption, or warped by the trammels of servility"; and worse still: "he joined a gang of desperadoes to spread calumny, contempt, infamy, wherever they were merited by honesty or talent on a different side—he officiously undertook to decide public questions by private insinuations, to prop the throne by nicknames, and the altar by lies — being (by common consent) the finest, the most humane and accomplished writer of his age, he associated himself with and encouraged the lowest panders of a venal press; deluging and nauseating the public mind with the offal and garbage of Billingsgate abuse and vulgar slang." What is all this nonsense? Is it mere "flyting"? Or did Hazlitt believe a word of it when he wrote it? I do not think that he believed a word of it. It is merely a noisy and elaborate method of expressing a Whiggish prejudice. It is a showy vengeance upon that sad word "pimpled." Yet proud as Hazlitt is of his satirical power, his satire misses its effect, because it is sent to the wrong address. And, with a full knowledge (or guilty ignorance) of Hazlitt's excesses in this kind, the Whigs have ever since held up their hands in pious horror at the exaggerations of Lockhart and Wilson and Maginn!

And Hazlitt easily surpassed the shameful shamelessness of the passage which I have quoted. In the very act to praise 'Peveril of the Peak,' he thus describes its author: "A thorough-paced partisan in his own person—intolerant, mercenary, mean; a professed toad-eater, a sturdy hack, a pitiful retailer or suborner of infamous slanders, a literary Jack Ketch, who would greedily sacrifice any one of another way of thinking as a victim to prejudice and power, and yet would do it by other hands rather than appear in in it himself." Yet Hazlitt was intelligent enough to know that such works of genius as the Waverley Novels do not proceed from Jack Ketch. He merely indulged once more his taste for invective, and showed himself a finer artist in this kind of writing than any of his contemporaries.

Spiteful as he is against all those with whom he disagreed, Hazlitt reserved the finest of his fury for Mr Blackwood and his staff. Long after they had forgotten to mention him, he refrained not his hand from insult. When he talks of the "filth and slime of the 'Quarterly Review,'" he cannot help adding, "or its drain, Blackwood's 'Edinburgh Magazine.'" Mr Blackwood is represented always as a "sycophant," and is warned to "take care how he implicates any really respectable char-

acter by defending it." And then in a violent *crescendo* of insult he involves in his literary hatred the whole Scottish nation. Not even James Howell himself shrieked more loudly than did Hazlitt against the Scots. "If they are not withheld by conscience or prudence," says he, "they have no *mauvaise honte*, no involuntary qualms or tremors, to qualify their effrontery and disregard of principle. Their impudence is extreme, their malice is cold-blooded, covert, crawling, deliberate, without the frailty or excuse of passion. They club their vices and their venality together, and by the help of both together are invincible. The choice spirits who have lately figured in a much-talked-of publication, with 'old Sylvanus at their head'—

> 'Leaning on cypress straddle stout,'

in their 'pious orgies' resemble a troop of Yahoos, or a herd of Satyrs—

> 'And with horned feet they beat the ground!'

that is to say, the floor of Mr Blackwood's shop!"

Thus Hazlitt, with his tongue in his cheek, let us hope, indicted a nation. After such ebullitions of anger and malice, no sane man could resent what others said of him, or take his own expressions of fury seriously. The battle between Hazlitt and 'Blackwood's Magazine' was, in truth, a slanging match, and nothing more.[1] It began with the letter of "The Old Friend with a New Face"; it was continued by Hazlitt in that lively article, some passages of which see the light for the first time in these pages, and afterwards *passim*. That Hazlitt kept it up longer than his adversaries reflects little credit on his humour. A sense of proportion might have suggested that the world was weary of or indifferent to the play of his cudgel. While the fight lasted the blows exchanged were shrewd, and the gravity of the combatants was well simulated. To-day, happily, the manners of controversy are restrained, and personal allusions are rightly out of favour. Nor will the ancient method be revived until there arises among us a band of writers carelessly conscious of a talent for "flyting." Meanwhile, it is satisfactory to remember that Lockhart and Wilson's attacks upon Hazlitt did not lessen the public estimation of his work, any more than Hazlitt's far grosser libels damaged the noble character of Sir Walter Scott. If a writer deserve remembrance, all the hostile criticism in the world shall not strike a blow at his living fame. For it is as true to-day as ever it was, that no man was ever written down except by himself.

CHARLES WHIBLEY.

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[1] Had the battle been of life and death, Mr Blackwood would not have been part publisher of Hazlitt's 'Table-Talk,' nor would the author have permitted Mr Blackwood's intervention.

H.M.S. ——.

XXXV. THROUGH AN ADMIRALTY WINDOW.

THE room was exactly the same as any room in any Government building, except that the Naval observer would have at once noticed one fact—that the furniture was of the unchanging Admiralty pattern. The roll-top desk, the chairs, and even the lamp-shades, would have been to him familiar friends. They were certainly familiar to the Post-Captain who sat at the desk. Captain Henry Ranson had been a noted Commander before his retirement—a man of whom many tales, both true and apocryphal, still circulated when Senior Officers of the Fleet forgathered at the lunch intervals of Courts-Martial and Inquiries. He had little opportunity in his present War appointment to display any of the characteristics on which his Sagas had been based, for neither seamanship, daring, or, well—Independent Initiative, were quite in keeping with the routine of an Admiralty Office.

To-day he was feeling the claustrophobia of London more acutely than usual. The sun was shining through the big window across the room, and he wanted to rise and look out at the blue sky and white cloud-tufts that he knew to be showing over the buildings across the Horse Guards Parade. His desk gave him no view through the window—he knew the weakness of his powers of concentration on his eternal paper work too well to have allowed himself such a distraction; but as the door opened to admit his clerk—a firm and earnest civilian with the zeal of monastic officialdom shining through his spectacles—he rose abruptly and moved out into the sunlight glare.

"Yes, Collins? What is it?"

"A small matter, sir, which is not quite in order. If you will glance through this you will no doubt agree with me."

The Captain took the sheets from the clerk's outstretched hand and moved a little away from the glaring light to read.

SIR,—I have the honour to bring to your notice the conduct of Skipper A. P. Marsh, of the Admiralty tug *Annie Laurie*, on the 22nd-23rd November 1917, and I beg to recommend him for decoration in view of the following facts:—

On November 21st, 1917, the steamer *Makalaka*, homeward bound with corn, was shelled by a U-boat when near the Irish coast. The enemy was dealt with by a patrol in the vicinity, but the *Makalaka*, proceeding east at full speed in accordance with instructions, was thrown out of her reckoning by a damaged compass, and found herself at dusk on a lee shore off the Galway

coast, with her shaft broken (a result of shell damage which had not been realised to be serious at the time it was incurred). Skipper Marsh, seeing her flares from his patrol to seaward, most gallantly closed her and took her in tow in a rising N.W. gale. In view of the probability of the attempt to tow failing, the crew of the *Makalaka* were taken aboard the tug, but the towing was continued through a full gale lasting twenty-four hours until the ship was out of danger.—I have the honour to be, sir, &c.

The Post-Captain folded the letter carefully and placed it on his desk. The clerk retrieved it, and moved towards the door. The Captain turned, "What are you going to do with that, Collins?"

"I take it that it needs only the usual reply, sir—that this is not approved—with a reference to the regulation bearing on the case."

"Why not approved, Collins?"

The clerk was shocked, and his tone showed it. "Because that decoration is for gallant action in face of the enemy, and this case does not come within its scope. In any case the man will get salvage." [The Captain made an impatient gesture.] "If the Royal Humane Society care to——" he stopped, because the Captain had walked to the window, and, in obvious inattention to the speaker, was staring out across the wide Horse Guards and far beyond the fleecy clouds that drifted across the sky over the great sea of buildings that hemmed him in.

Captain Ranson had gone on a journey—back through forty years of time, and across eighty-one degrees of longitude.

He ran up the gangway, straightened his helmet and dirk-belt, and approached the Commander, who, a tall dark-featured figure, was standing looking down on the boat as she rose and fell alongside to the gentle heave of the Indian Ocean—"Second cutter manned, sir."

The Commander turned and looked the boy over beneath his heavy eyebrows. "When are you going to set up a new port shroud?" he asked.

The Midshipman fingered the seam of his trousers, and looked carefully at the buttons on the Commander's tunic, "I thought, sir, that is, we've got a new shroud all fitted, but I thought—the coxswain said, sir—that the old one would do for to-day as the wind's nothing. . . ."

The barometric indications of the Commander's eyes showed threatening weather. He took the boy's arm in the grasp of a heavy hand and led him to the rail abreast the swinging mastheads of the boat.

"Now listen, young gentleman," he said. "What the coxswain said isn't evidence. It's *you* that command that boat, and *you* that will handle and command her. Don't talk

to me again as if you were a schoolboy." The Midshipman shivered and squinted cautiously up to see if the storm-signals were still in evidence. The dark stern eyes were looking down at him in a way that made him feel as if he was some luckless worm that had unhappily bored its way up into the publicity of an aviary. The Commander moved his hand and turned the boy to face him. "Now, you remember this, young gentleman, only seamen come through gales safely, it's the fools that go to sea with rusty shrouds and weak rigging. And if you're to be a seaman you must never go to sea, even in a flat calm, unless your ship is ready for a gale of wind. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then don't forget it, or I'll have you beaten till you grow corns. Now shove off, and pull away three cables on the port bow, drop your anchor on the shoal, and fit that new shroud. Remain there till the ship has got under way, done her night-firing, and signalled you to carry on. You will then close and weigh the target moorings, having the target ready for hoisting when the ship comes back to you. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"What have you got on your anchor?"

"A hundred and twenty fathom, sir—of four-inch."

"That is enough—there is thirty fathom on the shoal—Carry on!"

The Midshipman ran down the gangway, and, jumping into the cutter, "Carried on." The Commander was an officer of whom the boat-midshipmen stood in awe, and they were always thankful when the ordeal of reporting a possibly unready boat to him as "ready" was over.

The last shot kicked up a yellow fountain of spray in the glare of the searchlight, and ricochetted, humming, over the target and on towards Malaya. A rocket sailed up from the distant ship—the searchlight flickered out a couple of Morse signs, and went out, and in the velvety darkness of a tropic night the hands went forward in the cutter to weigh the anchor, the process of "shortening-in" having been accomplished a full hour ago. As the Midshipman stood up to superintend the operation, he saw a queer white line spreading and brightening along the horizon to the westward. A dash of rain struck his face, and a little gust of wind moaned past him. The crew looked up from their work to wonder, and in a matter of seconds the squall was on them. The wet hawser slipped and raced out, the hands jumping aft to get clear of the leaping turns as the cutter swung and drew hard on her anchor to the pressure of a tremendous wind. The white line rushed down on them, and showed as a turmoil of frothing sea, beaten flat by the wind into a sheet of phosphorescence veiled by low-flying spray. For a few

minutes they crouched and endured the sudden cold and wet, then a yaw of the boat sent the bowmen forward with suspicion in their minds. "Up and down, sir—anchor's aweigh," came the report, in a voice that started as a roar, but reached the Midshipman aft as a faint high wail. The Midshipman faced round to leeward, and thought hard. He had been anchored on the only possible shoal, and once driven off that there was no holding-ground till he should reach the edge of the surf off Trincomalee, twenty miles away — all between being charted as "Five hundred and no bottom." He called to the coxswain and clawed his way forward, picking up men by name as he passed them. They hove up their anchor, secured mainsail, awning, and mainmast in a dreadful tangle of rope and canvas to the anchor-ring—hitched an outlying corner of the tangle to a bight far up the hawser, and threw all over the bows. The cutter steadied head to wind, and the hands moved aft to raise the bow and protect themselves against the steady driving of the spray.

The Midshipman lay across the backboard, staring out to the port-quarter. Through the white haze he could see, at regular intervals, a quick-flashing gleam of yellow light. He knew what it was, and it did not comfort him. It was all he could see of the twenty-thousand candle-power of Foul Point Light, and although it was not getting much clearer it was certainly "drawing" from aft forward. He had the rough lie of the coast in his head, and he was just realising two things—first, that in spite of the sea-anchor he was being blown to leeward and ashore at an incredible rate; and second, that if he could not round Foul Point across the wind, he was going to be food for the big surf-sharks before the morning.

He roused the crew again, and set down to the oars. Before half the oars were out he had realised the futility of the effort, and was trying to get them back without further damage. He corrected his error with the loss of four oars and several feet of the cutter's gunwale — broken off when the wind tore the long ash oars away. As he remembered later, it was at this point that Foul Point Light began to show clearly through the spray, and that his coxswain began to sing an interminable hymn in the stern-sheets, and that the dark-faced Celtic stroke-oar, a man who had the reputation of being the worst character in all the ship, took over the helpless coxswain's duty. The Midshipman was staring fascinated at the swinging beam of light that was beating on them from the sand-spit broad on the quarter, when the stroke-oar's voice in his ear changed him from a boy to an officer—"What'll you do now, sir?"

The question was answered on the instant—"All hands, up masts and sails. Close-reef both, and pass the hawser aft. Lash out now, lads, and get down to it."

That twenty-minute evolution, by the light of a hurricane-lamp, was a nightmare. The mainsail and mainmast were all snarled up in miscellaneous turns of roping. The hawser was wet and cold, and seemed fifty times its original length, but the work was done. He had felt that no shroud, however new, would stand the strain he was going to put on the masts, and though the men cursed and swore at the delay and toil involved, he got what he wanted from them. One at a time the masts were hove up and clamped in position against the half-solid wind — the hawser, cut to length, clove-hitched round each masthead, and frapped clear round the cutter, with the whole hove taut with "Spanish Windlasses," till his clumsy hemp shrouds were braced to the strain. Then he braced himself by a glance at the light, swinging well over their heads now that they were close enough in to feel the first lift and heave of the outer surf, and yelled an order. The foresail rose, clattered furiously a moment against the mast, and then filled with a bang. "*Set mainsail!*" The cutter heeled over till her lee gunwale dipped—the masts bent and creaked, and the old boat went tearing into the wind on the best and last sail of her varied life. The Midshipman and the stroke-oar clung to the long tiller that was curved like a fishing-rod under the strain. There were no gusts or variations in the wind: it beat solidly against the canvas, heeling the cutter to the verge of capsizing, and driving her through the water at steamer speed. The leeway was extraordinarily great—the boat going sideways almost as fast as she went ahead; but that leeway saved her from going over. They cut through the outer surf off the point, the boat leaking from the sprung keel to the opened seams where the frapping hawser-turns bit into her thin sides — the crew baling furiously to keep their minds from the expectation of a great crash that would tell of a mast tearing its heel up and out through the weather side. It lasted for barely half an hour, but the arm-weary Midshipman felt as if it had been a four-hour watch. As the light drew aft, he eased his sheets and swung up the channel, still at racing speed, but safely bound for harbour. His memories in after years of the next few hours were vague and clouded by sleep. He remembered the sun rising as they drew in towards the silent white-walled dockyard; the *swish* of sand under the keel as he ran her hard up the boat-camber beach, and nothing more, till he woke to see the dreaded Commander — a tall white-clad figure — standing over him, looking with keen appraising eyes at the mass of hawser-turns that swathed boat and masts, and at the snoring bodies of the crew that lay on the hot sand around her.

The Clerk fidgeted. He had been kept waiting for a matter of seconds, and he did not like

it. The Captain turned to face him, and, to the surprised eyes of the Clerk, seemed to have changed suddenly into a young man—alert, quick, and decisive. "*No*, Collins," said a strange voice; "the man *did* act in the face of the enemy, and I will endorse the recommendation." He turned his eyes again to the window, but saw only the yellow gravel, the houses, and the smoke; the fetters of Routine seemed to clank warningly in his ears. "Yes," he said, "I have no reason to suppose the U-boat had not followed the steamer, or that she was not present all the time."

XXXVI. A MOST UNTRUE STORY.

The War was only in its first childhood and patrol work was still amusing, having not yet become a monotonous and unexciting business. The submarine was due to start back from patrol that night, and was just loafing along at twenty odd feet depth waiting for dark. The Captain was on watch at the periscope, swinging the instrument round from time to time to take a general survey of the horizon, but for the most part confining his scrutiny to the island to leeward. The island showed up clearly—the light of the setting sun flashing back from the windows of the buildings that looked out over the Bight. As the Captain took one of his all-round glances, he checked suddenly and concentrated his gaze to one point of the compass. A man who leaned against a pump six feet away—a man who had seemed to all appearance to be on the verge of sleep—opened his eyes, straightened up, and stood alertly watching the brown hands that held the periscope training handles. The signal seemed to be telepathically passed on, as in a few seconds there were six or eight pairs of eyes watching the observer, who still peered at the unknown sight which no one else in the boat could see. Then the Captain moved his head back from the eye-piece, smiled (and at the smile six of the watchers reverted to their oil-stained reading matter), and called to the First-Lieutenant, who was at the moment engaged with an Engine-room Artificer in a mumbled inquest over a broken air-valve spindle. As the First-Lieutenant approached, the Captain stepped to one side and indicated the eye-piece by a nod. His subordinate took his place, and for a full half-minute remained slowly swivelling the great instrument through four points and back again. When he raised his head he was scowling and sullen.

"Well?" said the Captain. "A good few there, eh?"

"*Lord!*" The First-Lieutenant's voice indicated the deepest disgust. "Thousands and thousands—and we can't get a shot at 'em!"

"Well, there's over a thousand, anyway. I've seen at

least that lot of teal in the last couple of minutes."

"*Teal!* Why, sir, I can see mallard now for the next half mile, and I could swear there'll be geese among them too."

"Here, let me look. Yes, by gum, and not one's getting up either. They let the periscope get to a few feet off before they paddle away . . ." He swivelled slowly round the circle, then looked up at the First-Lieutenant. "There's fog coming on. I can see the banks coming," he said. He looked again through the periscope and intently studied the windows on the island some three miles away. The First-Lieutenant watched his face, and saw it slowly break into the smile of a schoolboy meditating mischief. The First-Lieutenant began to smile slightly also. The Captain looked up.

"I can't help the island," he said. "War's hell, anyway. Give me a rifle and stand by for surface." There was a clatter and the sound of quick-passing orders; the boat's bow tilted up, and to the sound of roaring air she broke surface fairly in the middle of the great colony of swimming wildfowl. The hatch fell back with a clang and a rush of cold air beat on the excited faces of the men below the conning-tower. Immediately there came the *Crack-crack-crack* of magazine-fire from the bridge above, and the descendants of bowmen who had risked mutilation and death to steal the Conqueror's deer forgot their discipline and began to mount the ladder that led to the sunlight and a clear view.

The Captain turned to shout a helm order below and swore at the packed heads that filled the hatch-rim. ". . . and you come up, Number One, and lend a hand to pick up. I've got one—missed him on the water at a hundred and got him in the air as he rose! There he is—jump forr'd and grab him—dammit, he's off (*crack-crack*) . . . No, that's stopped him" (*bang*—the report came from the vicinity of the Captain's knee). "What the — confound you, man — what the deuce are you doing? Unload that pistol and take it away . . ."

Seven thousand yards away on the island a watcher lowered his glasses and reached for the button of the alarm bell. In two seconds the island was awake, and down in the lower battery men rushed to their stations. With clatter and turmoil the big guns were cleared away and the observing officer roared the order to "Stand by" into the telephone mouthpiece.

"What is it, Schultz? Can you see? Ach! she is going to bombard—the little swine of a boat. Give me the telescope. Ach, Gott! are they not reported ready, fool?" The Major was excited and bristling.

"Ready now—all but number six."

"At six thousand five hundred metres—all guns—Gott strafe der schmutzige . . . he has dived!"

The First-Lieutenant sprang up the outer ladder of the conning-tower, the bleeding spoil clutched in his hand. The Captain turned to look astern and became aware of the fact that the gallery, as represented by the bridge and rails, was tenanted by an enthusiastic and interested selection of his crew. "What the devil—is this a cinema or my ship? Don't you know your orders yet? Every man-jack of you . . ." He herded them below to the tune of a voluble hymn of hate, and followed the last of the grinning culprits down. As the boat levelled off at her previous diving depth, he swung the periscope round to search the horizon again to seaward. A moment later "Diving stations," and to the hydroplane men, "Take her on down."

The First-Lieutenant left the luckless mallard on the table and elbowed his way aft again through the cluster of men closing up to their stations. Reaching the control position, he looked inquiringly at the Captain, who, having lowered the periscope, was leaning with folded arms against a group of valves abreast it.

"Thick fog coming down. Going to bottom till dark now. Have a look at the soundings, will you—or tell Henley to let me know."

The First-Lieutenant moved back to speak to another officer, who was already bending over the chart-table. The Captain turned his head to watch the gauge beside him, the needle of which was slowly creeping upwards and around the circle. As it moved the gentle rolling of the boat that had been noticeable before ceased, and she steadied until she gave the idea of being high and dry in some silent dock. The officer, generally known as "Pilot" or —to his intimates and contemporaries—as "Rasputin" (a name, it should be explained, which had no possible application to him, except for the fact that he wore a beard), appeared at the Captain's side with a folded chart in his hand.

"We should touch at ninety by the gauge, sir," he said. "We must be about four miles from the land now."

The Captain nodded. "Yes, it may be a little more, though. Have the crew got a sweep on this?"

"No, sir. This is an extra dive, and they haven't had time to get one up. D'you want to bet on under or over ninety, sir?"

"I do not. I won last night's sweep, and lost it to you in side-bets, and I'm not taking any more. Stop the motors!"

The gauge had reached the eighty-foot mark, and the boat under the influence of her headway was still driving the needle slowly round. At ninety feet the Captain looked at the Pilot, smiled, and started the motors again. Hardly had he given the order when the needle checked, rose a little, and then crept back to ninety-five. "*Stop the motors!* I've lost a chance there, Pilot—'Wish I'd had a bet on that."

He stood watching the gauge

a moment longer, and then turned to walk to the Ward-room.

"Pipe down—usual sentries only," he ordered. "Tell my servant to get me some washing water."

He threw the curtain aside, and joined the two officers who stood looking solemnly at the mallard, which lay on a gory newspaper in the centre of the table. For a moment there was silence.

"Well," said the Captain cheerfully, "it's not as smashed as it might be. It'll do for a pie to-morrow."

"'Mm," said the First-Lieutenant, "'Keeper at home used to call rabbits that looked like that 'ferrets' food.'"

"Not a bit of it," rejoined the Captain; "if we mash him in a pie he'll be all right."

There was another pause while the First-Lieutenant tucked an extra fold of newspaper beneath the corpse—then, after a quick glance and nudge for the Pilot's benefit, he spoke in a detached and dispassionate voice.

"Of course, it was poaching."

The Captain's brown face began to slowly take on the colour of the gore on the table—then he exploded—

"What d'you mean? . . . *poaching*—it's below high-water mark, isn't it?"

"Well, sir—we don't know the rules in this country, and we were pretty well in their waters."

"But it's offshore. Why shouldn't I shoot their duck? It's not preserved, either. *Poaching!* I never poached anything—not since I was at school anyway." He scowled at the duck and the officers impartially. The officers clutched each other by the arms, then the Pilot walked hastily to a low-set bunk and buried his head in the pillow. The Captain changed his frown for a smile as the situation dawned on him, then, snatching the parallel rulers from the chart-table he began to belabour the most accessible portion of his gurgling subordinate's anatomy.

KLAXON.

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

THE MURDER OF THE TSAR—AUTOCRACY AND DEMOCRACY—THE CRIMES OF THE BOLSHEVIKS—BOLSHEVIKISM IN INDIA—"THE FAITH THAT IS IN US"—THE HYPOCRISY OF SELF-DETERMINATION—A NEW POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY—A GENERAL ELECTION—A USELESS BLUNDER—1832 AND 1918.

THE murder of the Tsar, a foul deed perpetrated by the Bolsheviks and encouraged by their friend and patron, the German Emperor, is the natural consequence of revolution. After a mock trial Nicholas II. was found guilty of crimes against his country. What these crimes were is not specified and does not matter. The excuse for murder is always secondary, and there is no argument framed by the mob of scoundrels called Bolsheviks which can carry conviction to an honest man's mind. After the same fashion, and with as little cause, Louis XVI. went to the guillotine more than a hundred years ago. He, poor man, was alleged to have made some sort of assault upon "liberty," and the champions of this illusory quality proved their own forbearing love of it by slaughtering those who were not in agreement with them.

When Louis XVI. was done to death, a thrill of horror ran through Europe. Even Talleyrand, least sentimental of men, was overcome by despondency, and retired to the country. "Tout ce qui avait le cœur français," said he, "a besoin de solitude." England put on mourning for the dead monarch, and "war with a doctrine" became inevitable. In how different a spirit was the news of the Tsar's murder received! It made but a ripple upon the surface of things. The war, and all that it means for Europe and the world, keeps the minds of men busy, and few there were who had a thought to spare for the man who had failed in a task too great for human endurance or sagacity, and who fell a victim, not to ambition or to a love of injustice, but to duty.

It was the hard fate of Nicholas II. to be called to the governance of a country inharmonious in its elements. He could have won success only by the goodwill and co-operation of all classes. Autocracy was imposed upon him not merely by inheritance but by the very nature of the task laid upon him. To govern a country made up of a Russian upper class, a Russian lower class, and a vast intermediate mass of hungry Germans, was not possible for any one who did not exact obedience and insist upon control. The simulacrum of popular government which Nicholas called into being under the name of the Duma was all that the people of Russia could manage or

understand. None but a fanatic would dare to drag a country, still in the fourteenth century of our development, into all the shams and trickeries practised in the twentieth century in the name of "freedom." Nicholas, then, was an autocrat by temperament and by necessity. And since to-day the word "democrat" has a sweetness of sound which surpasses in beauty the music of the spheres, the whole world is in a conspiracy to blacken his memory and to condone the crime of his murder.

Yet he asks our sorrow, not our condemnation. He was, after his fashion, an idealist. He saw visions of peace where peace can never be, and the meetings at the Hague, loudly acclaimed by our sentimentalists, who pretended that the age of gold was already come, were due to his initiative. He was misguided, no doubt, as idealists commonly are, and he has his reward in the abuse of the very sentimentalists who took credit for the work which he did. Nor will the part which he played at the outset of the war be frowned upon by future historians. He stood loyally by the side of the Entente, which he had helped to create, and by his firm attitude made the unity of the Allies certain. More than this, by a stroke of the pen he converted his country forcibly to temperance, and abolished the curse of vodka, which would surely have weakened the fighting forces of Russia. The fact that his nation was not prepared for war may not wholly be set down to his discredit. It was beyond the power of mortal man to knit up into an effective fighting force the scattered hordes of Russia, men held together neither by common speech nor by common sentiment. But what was possible he achieved, and he may claim his share of the praise which is due to many a brilliant advance, and to the bravest retreat recorded in the annals of the war.

And even when the revolution came the Tsar was gravely misjudged. It was not easy to obtain news from Russia, and that which came to us was tainted at the source. On all hands we were told that German influence had corrupted the Court of Russia, and that a revolution was the first necessity of carrying on the war. Those who made it, we heard, had but one thought—patriotism; but one policy—to defeat Germany in the field. Had this all been true, had the Tsar professed German sympathies, had a forcible change of government been essential for the conduct of the campaign, then the revolution would have been justified. No excuse could be pleaded for a Tsar who, for the sake of peace, was prepared to give his country, and Europe too, over, bound hand and foot, to Germany. But we know now, from the authentic stories told by returning travellers, that the Tsar was unto the end the foe of the Kaiser, that he did his best to foil the plots which the Huns were making against

his throne and his fatherland. The more light that is thrown upon a sinister intrigue, the more clearly will the Tsar be justified. Moreover, of whatever weakness the Tsar may have been guilty, one thing is certain: those who dared to snatch the reins from his hands—reins which they were powerless to hold—instantly drove the carriage of the Russian state down a steep place to destruction.

Let the work of the Tsar be judged by what was done in Russia after his abdication, and history will acquit him. No sooner had others taken up the heavy burden of responsibility than anarchy reigned, gaunt and unchecked. The ineffable Kerensky, a man of words, not deeds, a rhetorician who thought that a glib tongue was better than a stout arm, destroyed at a blow the discipline of the army. After this wicked surrender to the "people" resistance was impossible, and the mob in Russia turned lightly from the defence of their country to pillage and rapine. When all men were bidden to do as they pleased, murder stalked abroad in the street; cruelty was enthroned as a goddess, with theft and terror for her handmaidens. And then the motley crowd of criminals and Jews, of Lenins and the Trotskys, suborned by Germany, completed the direful work of anarchy. These miscreants sold their land, or the land in which they had been permitted to sojourn, to Germany, and put whatever price was paid for it in their own pocket. The peace of Brest-Litovsk, an undying disgrace to Germany, is a disgrace also to the rascals daring to call themselves Russians who signed it. Nothing ever done by a Tsar was worse than this betrayal; and though it is but one act in the pitiful drama of revolution, the doing of it and its effect will never be forgotten.

And in the train of revolution there now follow all the expected ills. To the perverse and insolent democracy, led by Lenin and Trotsky, Russia owes the further benefits of famine and cholera and plague. Against these woes the autocracy had effectively protected the people. Under the malign influence of the Soviets they have overrun the country. That is what happens always when greedy scoundrels, to satisfy ambition or to fill an empty pocket, pretend to the duties of government, which are far beyond their reach. The unspeakable Lenin, the criminal Trotsky, had no gifts of thought or speech to take the place of the tradition upheld by the Tsar. They knew not how to feed the people; they knew not how to save it from pestilence. Their cures for all evils were pillage and murder, and they put them in force with all their active frivolity. We shall see presently, when history lifts the veil, the havoc which they wrought. The historians of the future will record the crimes of the Red Guards and pass a fitting judgment. And it would be well if those who are eager

to condemn the Tsar unheard, because he had not a simple faith in the ballot-box as a quack medicine of universal application, would reflect what was the state of the country on the day of his abdication, and to what a depth of ignominy and misery it has sunk to-day. Moreover, the demagogues who have surrendered without a protest to Germany, are "popular governors" in name only. They have fastened such a tyranny upon those who do not agree with them as easily outstrips any system devised by autocrats. Nobody who is not of their party is permitted to move and live as he chooses. Death is the common guerdon of his intemperate desire. An assembly, elected by the sacred vote, which refuses to register the despotic decrees of Lenin and Trotsky, is not allowed to meet. And any suggestion of a return to a happier, safer life is denounced as "reaction" by the sentimentalists.

The sentimentalists, in truth, pretend to believe that the vices of a democracy are always better than the virtues of an autocracy. The old principle that "the king can do no wrong" has been perverted to the foolish fallacy that "the people can do no wrong." Whenever revolution has drenched the world in blood, the democrats have loudly expressed their approval. When Louis XVI. lost his head upon the scaffold, that pious democrat, Thomas Jefferson, who hitherto had lavished his insincere praise upon the "friend of America," hastily changed his tune. "We have just received here the news of the decapitation of the King of France. Should the present foment in Europe not produce republics everywhere, it will at least soften the monarchical governments by rendering monarchs amenable to punishment like other criminals." Jefferson's gratitude was as short-lived as his intelligence was ill-founded, but no doubt he thought the phrase "other criminals" an excellent invention. But while he applauded the death of a monarch who had served his country well, doubtless he excluded from the list of "criminals" popularly-elected Ministers. These have enjoyed every immunity until the present day. They might shirk their responsibilities as they chose, and still draw their pay in majesty. France, however, has created a new and a wise precedent. The banishment of M. Malvy proves that a popular Minister can yet be punished, and now that the precedent is established, let us hope that it will be followed wherever corruption be discovered or a dereliction of duty be proved.

Thus we may see in the past as in the present that the dogmatic democrat darkly confuses the moral values. A devout disciple of Tolstoi the fanatic, not Tolstoi the man of genius, Mr Aylmer Maude, has set forth what he thinks to be the crimes of Nicholas II. In the first place, he complains that "on May 18, 1896, the gross mismanagement by court favourites of the coro-

nation festivities at Moscow occasioned the death of over 3000 people and the injury of several more thousands." After the tragedy Nicholas II. attended a ball, as in duty bound. "Nero fiddled while Rome burnt, and Nicholas danced while the Khodinka victims were dying." A wickeder attack upon a man's reputation, whether the man be Tsar or ploughman, than this cannot be imagined. It was Nero himself who set fire to Rome, and took pleasure in his own act of destruction. If the Tsar had with his own hand and purposely caused the deaths, which none deplored more poignantly than he, Mr Maude's foolish statement might be excused. But not even Mr Maude brings a charge of murder against the victim of fate, and his rhetoric is meaningless and irrelevant. Again, Mr Maude pompously blames Nicholas II. for pledging himself to "maintain the principle of autocracy as firmly as his never-to-be-forgotten parent." Is this, then, a crime in an autocrat? And do not the imbecility of Kerensky and the vile excesses of Lenin and Trotsky prove that the Tsar was in the right? For Russia, at the stage of development which she has reached, autocracy is the one wise form of government, and she will recover it by a sane reaction, or she will perish in anarchy. At any rate, autocracy did not drive her to ruin and dismemberment; and if those who believe in democracy as a sovereign cure for all the ills that flesh is heir to can look unmoved upon the havoc that has been wrought in Russia, they are blinded by superstition and far beyond the reach of reason.

Nicholas II. was murdered by the instruments of the Kaiser. Had the master of Lenin and Trotsky lifted his finger the life of the Tsar would have been spared. And let him not pretend to himself that such a precedent is without weight or influence. Before the head of Mary Stuart fell upon the scaffold she warned her executioners that they were showing the way to others, and that hers would not be the last royal head to fall. The Tsar and the Kaiser were the last two autocrats of Europe. The one wished for nothing but the prosperity of his empire; the other was consumed by the passion of pillage and conquest. And if the Kaiser march after his last colleague to the scaffold, whose will be the fault? He has shown the way, and he will win no more than he deserves, if his ominous example be followed.

All the world over, Bolshevikism seems to be in the fashion. Undeterred by the fate of Russia, our Government has set itself gravely to relax "the bonds of superior official authority in India." We do not propose here to discuss the changes which, with characteristic levity, our Ministers intend to force upon India with as little discussion as may be. But we would say something about the political philosophy,

or the lack of it, which underlies the Report on Indian Constitutional Reform, and the high-handed manner in which these reforms are being forced upon the country. To begin with, Mr Montagu seems to think himself in some way or other personally involved in the controversy. It is not for him an agreement between India and the rest of the British Empire, but an agreement between India and Mr Montagu. In a speech which he made some time since in the presence of Lord Morley, Mr Montagu adopted a tone of defiance. "The things that Lord Morley and his colleagues did and taught to the world he was determined," so he said, "however great the difficulty and however loud the opposition, to go on with, and wherever he might find himself, and in whatever place he might be, to work all he knew and all he could to place India on the indisputable road to the final vindication and justification of the glorious British connection with India—responsible, complete, self-governed." Hoity-toity! Mr Montagu may be a very great man, but he is not yet a despot. In six months he may be in opposition or out of Parliament. Worshipper as he is of the democracy, he should remember that he is not a tenant for life, but merely the elect of an accidental majority. Nor does it seem tactful of Mr Montagu to have referred, before Lord Morley himself, to what that politician and Lord Minto had done and taught. For their teaching was in direct opposition to Mr Montagu's. Mr Montagu looks forward to an India—responsible, complete, self-governed. "If it could be said that this chapter of reforms," — thus spoke Lord Morley of his own policy,—"led directly or indirectly to the establishment of a parliamentary system in India, I for one would have nothing at all to do with it." Perhaps, then, it would have been better if Mr Montagu had left Lord Morley out of the question.

However, it is plainly Mr Montagu's future that is at stake, not the poor future of the British Empire. "Would those who dealt with the Report," demands Mr Montagu in his hectoring voice, "ask themselves whether they admitted the principle? If they did, they could proceed to argue about the Report itself. If they did not, there was no weapon probably but personal abuse." A grosser impertinence than this we have never met in a demagogue who aspires to statesmanship. We have asked ourselves whether we admit the principle, and we have no difficulty in answering "No." In this matter we are on the side of Lord Morley. But assuredly we do not admit that "there is no weapon but personal abuse." Mr Montagu is but a name to us—a name which, we believe, is not his own. We have no opinion good or bad about him. Our one criticism of his appointment is that he is unfitted by his blood to represent

Great Britain in a discussion with India. It now appears, by his own statement, that he is unfitted by temper also. And, having said so much about Mr Montagu, we will assure him that we like personal abuse as little as we like the principle of the Report of Indian Constitutional Reform, and shall forget all about him.

The political principle which underlies the Report is that responsible self-government is good at all times and in all places. It is based upon faith, not upon knowledge or foresight, and with faith it is not easy to argue. A man who is colour-blind will compare red with green, and believe, in spite of others' experience, that the grass is of a warm vermilion. And those who are responsible for the Indian report take it for granted that self-government in some form or other is a boon after which all men must strive. Even though a loss of efficiency and happiness should result, political freedom is the only prize that it is worth climbing up the greasy pole of life to seize. The pleasant life of the hustings and the ballot-box, the plots of the caucus, the venal sale of titles, the profitable resolution to root honour itself in dishonour, the manifold shapes and forms of corruption incident to what is ironically known as "liberty," —all these seem priceless boons to those who have enjoyed them, and with no niggard hand they would share them with others.

Such is the initial fallacy which destroys the value of Lord Chelmsford's Report. Before it can boast of any political value, it should prove, first of all, that India cannot be happy without relaxing the bond of Imperial authority, and that it is ready and willing to accept the burden of responsible government. So far as we can understand the Report, it gives no support to any argument based upon the desires or necessities of the Indian people. Though the ultimate aim of Lord Chelmsford's reforms is to give India some form of Home Rule, Mr Montagu assures us—we must apologise for referring once more to the great man—that "so far as he could discover, the whole of India was opposed to Home Rule now." We may carry the assertion a step further, and prove from the Report itself that only the smallest "handful of agitators" demands, consciously, any reform at all.

The Report reminds us that "the speeches of English and American statesmen, proclaiming the necessity for destroying German militarism, and for conceding the right of self-determination to the nations, have had much effect upon political opinion in India, and have contributed to give new force and vitality for the demand for self-government, which was making itself more widely heard among the progressive section of the people." Here, then, we have a clear statement of a democratic principle, made in Germany,

no doubt, and used to hypnotise Germany's enemies. But "self-determination" can be arrived at only by votes, and in the collection of votes, as every true democrat knows, no advantage must be given to prudence or to education. It is, indeed, the first clause in the creed of your true Bolshevik that the proletariat alone is entitled to discharge the duties of government. Herr Lenin's eminent representative in this country has, we believe, formulated his political philosophy in these terms. And even those who do not carry Bolshevikism to its logical conclusion, would still extend the privilege of the franchise as widely as possible. What, then, would happen if India were invited to determine for herself her own future? The Report leaves us in no doubt whatever.

Of the 244 millions in British India, it is admitted 226 millions live a rural life, "and the proportion of these who ever give a thought to matters beyond the horizon of their villages is very small." They are a patient, contented folk. "What concerns them is mainly the rainfall or the irrigation supply from wells or canals, the price of grain and cloth, the payment of rent to the landlord or revenue to the State, the repayment of advances to the village banker, the observance of religious festivals, the education of their sons, the marriage of their daughters, their health and that of their cattle." Is it into this Arcadian bliss that our politicians would rush with their raucous shouts of self-determination? And how if they did bring their precious gift to the peaceful countryside, what would "self-determination" mean to the amiable peasants? Nothing more than Mesopotamia, that once blessed word. For, indeed, only 6 per cent of the population of India, urban or rural, can read or write, and no more than 2 millions out of 244 have any knowledge of English whatever. To speak of self-determination and Indian reform, therefore, in the same sentence is sheer nonsense. The British Government and the agitators have determined and will force upon the people of India a system which they do not want and which they cannot understand.

When the Report, therefore, speaks of self-determination, either it is attempting to create a false sympathy for its proposals, or, contrary to the practice of all good democrats, it is permitting the minority tail to wag the majority dog. In other words, it is giving way to the small number of Indian politicians who pretend to speak for the whole country, because their voices alone are audible. They are surrendering also to the agitators, some of whom, no doubt, are inspired by an echo, that has reached them, of the blessings of English political "freedom"; while others, irreconcilable, are merely obeying the behests of Germany and spending German money. It is the habit of our Government to yield always to clamour and lawless-

ness. The women who burned churches and committed orgies of unseemliness in the streets were rewarded with the vote, and the Bengal anarchists, who "established communication both with German agents and with agents of the revolutionary party outside India," have had far more influence upon our Government than the vast majority of industrious, law-abiding, contented Indians. But, again, that does not make for "self-determination," and since that pretext may be ruled out as wholly insincere, no argument remains save that, already mentioned, of blind unquestioning faith in the sanctity of "Liberal institutions."

Nor can the writers of the Report put forth the excuse that our system of government in India has failed. It admits that that system has been "constructed by builders who had no models before them, during a century and a half of steadfast purpose and honourable aim; a system which has won the admiration of critical observers from many lands, and to which other nations that found themselves called upon to undertake a similar task of restoring order and good government in disturbed countries have always turned for inspiration and guidance. England may be proud of her record in India." The success of the system is obviously a good reason for upsetting it. The system has been an inspiration and a guide to those who cared for good government. Therefore abolish it. England may be proud of what she has done. Lower her pride at once. That is what it is proposed to achieve, at the risk of disturbing the welfare of hundreds of millions. Nor is any reason alleged for the coming change. The autocrats, who impose their will upon the Empire, disdain argument. They care not whether the Indians are fit for revolution or not. As we have pointed out, they are sustained by a blind faith alone—a faith "that because our purpose is right it will be furthered by all that is best in the people of all races in India." Was there ever displayed so reckless a confusion of thought? They assume, the writers of the Report, that their "purpose is right," and there is an end of it. They admit that the number of persons "who ask for free institutions does not exceed five per cent of the population." That matters nothing; they shout "self-determination," they trample on the first principles of the democracy which they profess. And what is their reason? "Our reason," they repeat with due solemnity, "is the faith that is in us."

Thus they outrage all the tenets of political philosophy. And the famous pronouncement of August 20, 1917, promising "the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire," fills them with an hysterical pride. "We take these words,"

say these modest authors, "to be the most momentous utterance ever made in India's chequered history." What might be a compliment upon disinterested lips is pure boastfulness when it comes from those who framed the utterance. But, momentous or not, the utterance, we are told, must stand inviolate for ever. Mr Lionel Curtis informs us that it is a definite and inalterable pledge. "By neglect to examine our engagements," says he, "we may sap the foundations of British credit, not merely in India, but also wherever the conference is held which must sooner or later end this war." This is nonsense, and mischievous nonsense. The arrangements which are made or not made between Great Britain and India have nothing whatever to do with the peace conference. We are still masters in our own house, enfeebled though that house be by politicians; and to pretend that the "utterance," momentous though it appear to its partial authors, pledges the country to a definite action is to misunderstand that precious boon, the palladium of our liberties, and all the rest of it—parliamentary government.

The momentous utterance, in point of fact, was made in answer to a question put by a private member. If answers to private members are to bind the Empire hand and foot, what becomes of the Constitution? We have fondly believed that we were in the full enjoyment of representative government. We have been told that the will of the people shall prevail. So sacred has the wish of the voters appeared to our governors, that we refused to arm ourselves against the power of Germany, because the people was not interested in defence. Better the destruction of the whole Empire than any interference with the supreme might of the people! And now we hear that an answer to a private member is an irrefragable engagement! The policies which of old were decided at general elections are now settled at question time. If Mr Bonar Law assures us in his best manner that "the answer is in the negative"—why can't he say No?—then disgrace attaches to us at peace conferences and other amiable resorts if we do not agree with him. Here is another principle new to politics, and its enunciation proves once more that our politicians repeat their clap-trap about the will of the people, not because they believe in it, but because the false flattery helps them to catch votes.

In all other attempts to establish "free institutions" we have heard a vast deal concerning the wisdom and fitness of the proletariat. The writers of the Indian Report do not and cannot pretend that those whom they would implicate in this conspiracy of "freedom" either want the responsibility of popular government, or would understand what it meant were it laid upon them. "The rural classes," says the Report, "have the greatest stake in the country,

because they contribute most to its revenues; but they are poorly equipped for politics, and do not at present wish to take part in them." So they must be forced. "If they won't tak' it, gar them tak' it." In other words, the Indians are to be set running down the inclined plane of "freedom," and are to be taught how to guide their steps aright as they go on. *Solvitur ambulando.* They will learn how to become citizens by walking to the ballot-box. The privilege is to be given, and the education, which might perhaps make the privilege valuable, will come after. Was there ever so foolish an example of putting the cart before the horse? But at any rate it will provide fresh activity for the hapless civil servants. When these officials "are not busy carrying out the policy of Indian ministers," they will be "helping India along her difficult journey to self-government." In other words, theirs will be the glorious duty of teaching the young idea how to vote, of explaining to the simple folk who never heard of it before the value of "graft"; and it will not be surprising if the efficient public servants who hitherto have wisely and righteously administered the affairs of India will prefer to stay at home. "The ruler ruled" is not a pleasant *rôle* for any man to fill, and though the Report offers its victims a higher pay and longer leave, it will probably offer these boons in vain.

In conclusion, we would quote one passage from an official report: "We have to bring about," says this report, "the most radical revolution in the people's traditional ideas of the relation between ruler and ruled, and it will be a difficult and even dangerous business, for it is neither safe nor easy to meddle with traditional ideas in India. Unless the political changes now in contemplation are accompanied by an educational campaign directed to awaking in all classes alike a sense of citizenship, disaster will certainly result." Disaster certainly will result. But what will that matter? Some of our Ministers, at least, will have vindicated "the faith that is in them."

Ever since the war began a spirit of utter recklessness has possessed our politicians. They know, or should know, that a sense of security at home is essential to victory in the field, and security cannot be preserved in the face of vast, superfluous changes. Yet they have run the risk of passing such a Franchise Bill as madness has never dreamed before. The barriers of sex have been broken down, and all the old safeguards, which assured some sanity of election, have been abolished. Nobody knows, and among politicians nobody seems to care, how the millions of new voters will vote. Probably our Ministers prate, like the framers of the Indian Report, of the faith that is in them. But that kind of faith, though it may make revolutions, will not win battles, and

it must be admitted that the Germans have every reason to congratulate themselves upon our domestic policy.

Now, so long as the Franchise Bill was not put to the test, it was not of great importance. As a specimen of folly in a political museum it was no better and no worse than the others. And it seemed as though there was small chance of putting it to the test. There is no necessity for a General Election. Our Ministers can easily vote themselves into perpetual office, and though they are not all heaven-born statesmen, we "would rather bear the ills we have than fly to others that we know not of." In spite of the grumblings of the pacifists, the present Government is well set upon the prosecution of the war, and that is all we would ask of it. And then suddenly comes the news of a General Election before the year is out. Why it should be held we are not told; what end it could possibly serve is hidden from us; what is certain is that they who insist upon it are involving the country in the greatest danger, and that if they make an error in their calculation they will condemn us to defeat and open shame.

A few odd men who hang about the doors of the public-house, a dozen women who take their ease with their separation allowances, may drive us into an ignominious peace. We do not know whether they will or not, because we know nothing whatever about them. It is a very pretty superstition that we can always rely upon the good sense of the British People. But the British People which, it is rumoured, will go to the polls in November next is a People of which no politician has the slightest experience. The mass of the new voters, probably, does not think much or know much, and will be an easy prey of the demagogue with a glib tongue and an evil heart. And upon the "good sense" of this vast Unknown we are staking, for no reason whatever, the future of Great Britain and of the British Empire. Suppose our new masters and mistresses bid us curtly to make a hasty peace, and with such men as Lord Lansdowne and Mr Webb, Messrs Henderson and R. Macdonald to misguide them, it is possible that this may be their bidding; then shall we be compelled, according to the rules of a foolish game, to desert our Allies and show ourselves dishonoured in the eyes of all the world.

In this crisis we have nothing but the past to teach us, and the past teaches us no lesson of encouragement. A Parliament elected upon a new franchise is generally inharmonious, wild, disjointed. The Reform Bill of 1832 was a mere nothing compared with the Reform Bill of 1917. And yet what havoc it played with the House of Commons! Bad manners, strange faces, swagger and incompetence—these were the characteristics of the new Par-

liament. The Government had no power over the House, and nothing stood between the country and anarchy save Lord Grey's Cabinet. "If he be defeated in any great measure," said Grenville, "he must either abandon the country to its fate, or consent to carry on the Government upon the condition of a virtual transfer of the executive power to the House of Commons. If this comes to pass the game is up." And as the House declined in wisdom, it grew in passion, prejudice, and folly, until a sympathetic reformer was obliged to confess "that in point of ability it was not only inferior to the last, but perhaps to any Parliament that has sat for many years."

But there is this difference between 1832 and 1918. In 1832, Great Britain was not engaged in a life-and-death struggle with an enemy who aimed at the dominion of the world. She had not pledged her faith to loyal and constant Allies. It mattered not greatly then what the House of Commons did or failed to do. Our very existence, to say nothing of our honour, will depend upon the election which threatens us under the new Franchise Act. It is not too late to draw back; it is not too late to postpone this wanton leap into the darkness. So long as they prosecute the war with energy, the present Ministers may be assured of the country's support; and a dozen general elections, even if they turned out well, could not do more than confirm that assurance. If one turned out ill—what then? Lord Lansdowne in power, and a peace by negotiation! Surely we have had gambles enough in the last four years. Cannot we now, when we ride on the wave of victory, forget all the schemes and futilities of political warfare, and determine that all our weapons, all our energies, shall be directed against the Germans?

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